ILLUSTRATOR, COLLABORATOR, AUTEUR: THE EXPRESSION AND ENACTMENT OF AGENCY IN DESIGN/SCENOGRAPHY EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that there has been an authorial turn in the occupational identities of theatre designer/scenographers, illustrated through the title of this thesis, 'Illustrator, Collaborator, Auteur'. The authorial turn has been caused by the scenographic turn that may be described as a turn away from design/scenography *for* performance towards design/scenography *as* performance and this has led to a shift in the positionality of designer/scenographers in performance making. Design/scenography education is chosen as the context for the study as it is both an under-theorised area of scholarly enquiry and represents a site of social practices with the potential to provide insights into the changing occupational role of the designer/scenographer. The dual disciplinary context of the study, namely drama and education, necessitates engagement with theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches from both disciplines. These are applied in two case studies of design/scenography education. The first examines the emergence of design/scenography education in the UK in the period between the wars at the London Theatre Studio, and the subsequently constituted Motley Theatre Design Course. The second presents analysis of interviews with current course leaders of design courses.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The theatre designer, Michael Pavelka, opens his book, *So You Want to Be a Theatre Designer*, with the following statement:

> The word [scenography] remains tinged with academic or at least overly conceptual ways of approaching theatrical ideas […] I avoid using the term on a daily basis as it tends to create a twinge of panic in directors (because they might perhaps think you're stomping through their intellectual space), in a design team (because it smacks of pulling rank and could sound pretentious/competitive) or to technicians (because they probably don't care what you call what you do).[1]

Pavelka trained as a theatre designer at Wimbledon College of Art, taught by Malcolm Pride and Richard Negri,[2] both of whom studied design at the Old Vic Theatre School between 1947 and 1952.[3] The course director was Margaret 'Percy' Harris who, with Sophie Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery, were known as the Motley Theatre Design Group.[4]

Pavelka's educational experiences matter because, as this thesis will show, they arise from a design tradition, associated with the Motley Theatre Design Course, that conceptualises design and the designer in particular ways; as reactive to text, and positioned within a performance making hierarchy. Pavelka's observation highlights the disruptive potential of the 'scenographic turn' on the conceptualisation of the designer/scenographer in performance making. Brejzek

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[1] Michael Pavelka, *So You Want to Be a Theatre Designer?* (London: Nick Hern Books Ltd, 2015), pp. 3–4.
[2] Michael Pavelka, 'Biography: Michael Pavelka', *Michael Pavelka: Biography*, 2018 <http://www.michaelpavelka.com/biography/> [accessed 1 July 2018].
[3] Michael Mullin, *Design by Motley* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1996), p. 115.
[4] Mullin, p. 116.

provides a definition of the 'scenographic':

> The notion of the 'scenographic' has come to encompass the totality of all material and immaterial elements that make up a performance or an environment […] [T]he discipline's twentieth-century battles for dominance between the tectonic (structural, meaningful) in architecture and the scenographic (decorative, effect-producing) in theatre have simply evaporated.[5]

This gives rise to the notion of the 'scenographer'. Pavelka suggests that this occupational identity departs from the practicalities of designing because it is perceived as being conceptual. He proposes that this disrupts custom and practice in performance making by challenging hierarchy and fixity of role, either by stepping into a director's territory or by 'pulling rank' on those further down.

There appears to be a dissonance between approaches to performance organisation that are hierarchical and have clearly defined domains of creative activity, and that implied by scenography. This provides the broad context for the research problem for this study which is: what does it mean to *be* a designer/scenographer, to *do* design/scenography and how has/is this changing? UK design education provides the context for an examination of these questions, with some reference to design education in Europe. The study deliberately adopts methodological approaches from the arts and humanities and social sciences, including education studies. I explain these methodological choices in more detail in chapter three. Later in this introduction I will explain why education provides the context for the examination of agency and positionality in performance making.

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[5] Thea Brejzek, 'The Scenographic (Re-)Turn: Figures of Surface, Space and Spectator in Theatre and Architecture Theory 1680-1980', *Theatre and Performance Design*, 1.1–2 (2016), 17–30 (p. 18).

2. Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse the expression of designer/scenographer agency in design/scenography education, to elucidate designer/scenographer positionality and agency in performance making. The four research questions that this study will address are:

- When and why did it become necessary for design/scenography to be taught in the UK?
- How does design/scenography education position designer/scenographers in the organisation of performance making?
- How does design/scenography education express designer/scenographer agency?
- Is there a relationship between designer/scenographer positionality in performance making, and the expression and enactment of designer/scenographer agency, in design/scenography education?

I argue that the turn to scenography challenges hierarchical forms of performance making, because it destabilises occupational roles. I will demonstrate that this is apparent in current design/scenography courses in higher education. I will show that although expansive conceptualisations of design/scenography appear to liberate designer/scenographers from performance making hierarchies, any radical potential arising from this is confounded by precarious conditions in education and employment. A significant finding of this study is that there are signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education that are threatened by the imposition of technicist models of teaching and learning. This thesis will show that technicist models of education arise from neoliberal policy in

higher education and the arts and this leads to precarious subjectivities of learners, educators and professional designer/scenographers.

In the next part of this chapter, I will explain the key terms used in this thesis, for example: positionality, agency, pedagogy and curriculum. However, before I do, I will first explain the 'scenographic turn' in order to contextualise my use of the conflated terms *design/scenography* and *designer/scenographer* in this thesis.

3. The Scenographic Turn

The notion of the 'scenographic turn'[6] that emerged in the UK in the late 1990s has much in common with other turns that emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For example, 'the spatial turn',[7] characterised by 'trans-disciplinarity' and the expansion of 'one discipline's bounds through the tools and framework of another'.[8] There is also Stiegler's idea of the 'mechanical turn',[9] that considers how working processes are constituted.[10] Therefore, the scenographic turn is trans-disciplinary and characterised by a concern with processual dimensions of performance. Brejzek argues that cultural turns do not represent sharp 'epistemological ruptures', but small shifts in understanding:

> The many cultural 'turns' have, over time, shifted the focus in the arts, social sciences, design and the humanities from looking at objects as representatives of a culture to the recognition of dynamic processes and actions as producing heterogeneous realities.[11]

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[6] Adrian Curtain and David Roesner, 'Sounding Out "The Scenographic Turn": Eight Position Statements', *Theatre and Performance Design*, 1.1–2 (2015), 107–26.
[7] Fiona Wilkie, 'Performance and the Spatial Turn', *Theatre Journal*, 67.4 (2015), 735–45.
[8] Anonymous, 'The Spatial Turn', *Le Journal Spéciale'Z*, 2012, 59–60 (p. 59).
[9] Bernard Stiegler, *Symbolic Misery: The Hyperindustrial Epoch* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2014).
[10] Néill O Dwyer, 'The Scenographic Turn: The Pharmacology of the Digitisation of Scenography', *Theatre and Performance Design*, 1.1–2 (2015), 48–63 (p. 48).
[11] Brejzek, 'The Scenographic (Re-)Turn: Figures of Surface, Space and Spectator in Theatre and Architecture Theory 1680-1980', p. 17.

The scenographic turn represents a turning from design/scenography artefacts/objects, towards design/scenography processes, or a turn away from design/scenography *for* performance towards design/scenography *as* performance. This turn prompts an examination of the boundaries of the design/scenography field.

In chapter two of this thesis, I historicise the emergence of the term 'scenography', and the scholarly field associated with it. I examine how scholarly literature defines and conceptualises the notion of the scenographic since the millennium, and conclude that it is expansive and dynamic. It is expansive because it signals the move of design/scenography beyond theatre architecture to found spaces[12] and virtual spaces.[13] Lavender suggests there has been a shift from mise en scène (the arrangement of the stage) through mise en événement (the arrangement of the event) to mise en sensibilité (the arrangement of feeling).[14] Scenography is characterised by hybridity,[15] with working practices that are transdisciplinary[16] and collaborative,[17] and informed by a spirit of what Anderson calls 'vagrancy';[18] an opportunistic and political attitude towards the occupation of space.

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[12] Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017), p. 5.
[13] Iryna Kuksa and Mark Childs, 'But a Walking Shadow: Designing, Performing and Learning on the Virtual Stage', *Learning, Media and Technology*, 35.3 (2010), 275–91 (p. 275).
[14] Andy Lavender, *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 5.
[15] Lavender, pp. 59–76.
[16] Dwyer, p. 48.
[17] Kirsten Dehlholm, 'TALKS - Intersection', 2016 <http://www.intersection.cz/prague/talks/> [accessed 29 May 2016].
[18] Benedict Anderson, 'Out of Space: The Rise of Vagrancy in Scenography', *Performance Research*, 18.3 (2013), 109–18 (p. 109).

The scenographic is also associated with what Lehmann defines as postdramatic theatre. Lehmann uses Planchon's expression 'écriture scénique'[19] to describe the postdramatic; a 'scenically orientated' theatre[20] where a text-based dramaturgy is replaced by a 'visual dramaturgy'.[21] In dramatic theatre, Lehmann argues, all elements of performance are subjugated to the 'primacy of the text'.[22] Tomlin argues that Lehmann establishes a duality between dramatic and postdramatic theatre, and that this is overly reductive because he conflates the *form* of performance with *ideology*. She argues that Lehmann's duality consolidates an existing ideological binary, where the postdramatic is perceived as radical and the dramatic as reactionary and logocentric.[23] Similarly, Radosavljević suggests that there is a paradigmatic position within British academia that juxtaposes text-based theatre 'adversarially' against *performance*, which is seen as 'more empowering and potentially democratizing'.[24] Tomlin argues, however, that avant-garde performance retains theocratic authority through the continuance of the role of the director, rather than the playwright. She argues that the arrangement of performance making in dramatic and postdramatic forms is very similar:

> [W]hether postdramatic performance - that is theatre or performance that is in some way scored, directed, rehearsed, performed and repeated across a series of nights by performers in front of an audience - can claim any real philosophical distinction from the dramatic model which shares the same overall theatrical framework, regardless of

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[19] Jim Carmody, 'Reading Scenic Writing: Barthes, Brecht, and Theatre Photography', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 5.1 (1990), 25–38 (p. 25).
[20] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 17.
[21] Lehmann, p. 93.
[22] Lehmann, p. 21.
[23] Liz Tomlin, *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory, 1990-2010* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 51.
[24] Duška Radosavljević, *Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 18.

> their differences in aesthetic form.[25]

One of the problems with the notion of the postdramatic, suggests Carlson, is that the term has become ubiquitous:

> [A] major price paid for popularity has been wide application of the term, [postdramatic] to the point that anything like a coherent and consistent definition of the term has become quite impossible.[26]

Therefore, rather than adopt the term postdramatic, I prefer Lehmann's term 'parataxis', or the 'de-hierarchisation of theatrical means'.[27] This concept is concerned with performance organisation, rather than the *form* of performance. However, as I shall show through this study, performance forms may be often, but not always, associated with particular approaches to performance organisation.

The notion of parataxis problematises the idea of singular identities in design/scenography, and this is why this concept is relevant to discussions of occupational roles, as McKinney and Butterworth observe:

> The concept and practice of scenography does not promote existing hierarchies of roles and functions […] Scenography and its production sit uneasily within the existing functions of writer, director, choreographer, designer and performer because each, or any combination, of these roles is capable of producing scenography in ways that will not accept restriction implicitly imposed by such singular identities.[28]

Scenography has the potential to deterritorialise roles in performance making. The term 'scenographer' is unhelpful because it implies a singular identity, separate

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[25] Tomlin, *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory, 1990-2010*, p. 70.
[26] Marvin Carlson, 'Postdramatic Theatre and Postdramatic Performance', *Revista Brasiliera de Estudos Da Presenca Brazilian Journal on Presence Studies*, 5.3 (2015), 577–95 (p. 578).
[27] Lehmann, p. 86.
[28] Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 5.

from ‘actor’ or ‘director’. There is an implication that these terms refer to fixed occupational identities, but as Jump observes:

> One of the struggles faced in our line of work is labelling. Do we call ourselves theatre designers or scenographers? Is it craft or art? Can I call myself a theatre designer if I don’t design performances that take place in a theatre? Am I a designer if I organise the performance space and its use but don’t design anything that is physically placed in that space? Am I a scenographer if I only design one aspect of the performance?[29]

Jump’s occupational dilemma highlights the reasons why I have chosen to conflate the terms design/scenography and designer/scenographer in this thesis, which I shall now explain.

3.1 Conflation of Terms and the Tactic of the Discursive Field

By conflating the terms design/scenography and designer/scenographer I am not indicating that they refer conceptually to the same practices or occupational identities. There has been a conceptual shift from ‘theatre design’ toward ‘scenography’ and associated professional roles and this is reflected in the title of the thesis: ‘Illustrator, Collaborator and Auteur’. By using the conflated term ‘design/scenography’ I recognise that the terms are *related*, rather than conceptually *the same*.

In the literature review in chapter two I show that there is a proliferation of terms associated with the visual, auditory, environmental and experiential dimensions of performance. For example, in discussions about ‘scenography’,

[29] *Transformation and Revelation: UK Design for Performance 2007-2011*, ed. by Greer Crawley, Peter Farley, and Sophie Jump (Sidcup: Blatter Ltd., 2011), p. 7.

Łarionow suggests that there is a 'charade of the meanings engendered by the […] term'.[30] Scorzin argues that the term is 'loosely applied' to 'theatrical staging, museography […] and film-set design' and used as 'an umbrella term' for a range of practices concerned with 'staging, orchestrating, dramatizing and enacting'.[31] Isackes expresses a preference for the term 'performance design',[32] as do Hannah and Harsløf because, they argue, 'scenography' is associated with the theatre stage, excluding other sites of performance.[33] Scenography is contested because defining the term implies separation from performance, as Parker comments:

> We cannot isolate scenography as a study much in the way we may look closely at the written play text in isolation from what we know to be the whole experience of theatre.[34]

McKinney and Butterworth support this view, arguing that scenography may only be defined 'in performance'.[35] This means that any attempt to define the boundaries of different terms through conceptual separation from performance is problematic. Furthermore, the tendency to dissemble may be a characteristic of scholarly enquiry. This tendency, argues Jackson, may have hindered the progress of inquiry by decontextualizing the objects of inquiry:

> The production and reproduction of knowledge is, to some extent, a formalist operation in de-contextualization. To the extent that the discernment and dissemination of knowledge requires boundedness

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[30] Dominika Łarionow, 'Scenography Studies - On the Margin of Art History and Theater Studies', Art Inquiry: Recherches Sur Les Arts, XVI (2014), 115–26 (p. 122).
[31] Pamela C. Scorzin, 'Metascenography On the Metareferential Turn in Scenography', in *Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media*, ed. by Werner Wolf (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, 2011), pp. 259–77 (pp. 259–60).
[32] Richard M Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', *American Theatre* (New York, January 2011), 96–100 (p. 99).
[33] Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf, *Performance Design* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), p. 12..
[34] Ellie Parker, 'Reception of the Image', in *Performing Processes*, ed. by Roberta Mock (Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd, 2000), pp. 103–21 (p. 104).
[35] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 4.

> and containment, performance has fared unevenly in the academy.[36]

Therefore the attempt at boundedness and containment by defining the related terms of 'design' and 'scenography' does not reflect the expanding and expansive conceptualisations of terms associated with visual and other dimensions of performance. For example, McKinney and Palmer suggest that the category of 'scenography' is in danger of collapsing due to the proliferation of terms.[37] Similarly, Collins and Nisbet suggest that scenography is situated in an 'unsettled and vertiginous terrain'[38] and, because of this, should be treated like 'a discursive field':

> Scenography encapsulates the whole event, including the performers and the audience; it is the discursive field in which these distinct and yet overlapping practices converge.[39]

Bartel provides an explanation of the concept of discourse, and the notion of a frame within a discourse:

> A discourse evolves as a system of thought reflexively created with particular ideas and beliefs, actions and practices, attitudes and preferences, and the subjects and worlds these systematically construct […] Within a particular discourse participants can make choices, sometimes subconsciously and sometimes strategically, about how to "hear" something or how to "say" something. This can be called framing.[40]

Therefore, the first part of the literature review in chapter two organises

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[36] Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance*, *Professing Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 6.
[37] McKinney and Palmer, p. 1.
[38] Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet, 'Introduction', in *Theatre and Performance Design: A Reader in Scenography*, ed. by Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1–10 (p. 3).
[39] Collins and Nisbet, p. 2.
[40] Lee Bartel, 'Discursive Frame', in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. by Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc., 2010), pp. 311–12 (p. 311).

conceptualisations of design/scenography, that arise from the scholarly literature, into five 'discursive frames'. This tactic is designed to manage the plurality of terms associated with 'design' and 'scenography'. This approach is informed by Tromans' tactic of conceptualising the phenomenon of design/scenography through a deleuzoguattarian concept of haecceity. Tromans describes haecceity as a mode of 'individuation' that is beyond 'a person, subject, thing or substance'; it is 'the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate'.[41] As I have already stated, I do not attempt to address ontological questions about the essence of design or scenography in this review, but aim to problematise notions of essence associated with 'design' and 'scenography'.

There is an exception to this. In the historical context of the Motley Theatre Design Course, the notion of 'theatre design' is associated with particular practices, derived from a play text, with the designer located within a performance making hierarchy. Design is conceptualised as being *for* performance rather that *as* theatre-making, in the way that 'scenography' has been conceptualised by Hann.[42] Therefore, in chapters four and five I do not use the conflated terms design/scenography and designer/scenographer, but the terms 'theatre design' and 'designer'. However, in contemporary education contexts, as I shall show in chapter six, design/scenography courses combine practices associated with text interpretation alongside processual, experiential and authorial dimensions of performance. These practices co-exist but bear little relation to course titles, that are more often determined by marketing and recruitment concerns than by

[41] Steve Tromans, 'Scenography: Separating the Inseparable?', *Performance Research*, 18.3 (2013), 195–96 (p. 195).
[42] Rachel Hann, *Beyond Scenography* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), p. 5.

ontological questions about terms.

Therefore, my choice to conflate 'design' with 'scenography' does not form the basis of a claim that the terms refer conceptually to the *same* practices, but that the terms are *related.* The case study of the Motley Theatre Design Course permits the use of design/designer because the use is contextualised to a specific setting, rather than generalised across many conceptualisations. However, throughout this thesis, with the exception of chapters four and five, I adopt the short-hand term design/scenography to recognise this relation and the breadth of practice associated with it. Where there are specific practices associated with the discursive frames that I have defined in chapter two, I will then refer to the specific discursive frame that best describes the practice in that particular setting. Therefore, the conflation of terms in this thesis represents two things; it is a strategy for managing the proliferation of meanings associated with the terms that emerge from the scholarly literature, and, in discussion of current models of design/scenography education, enables me to refer to practices that co-exist on a single course, simultaneously.

4. Interdisciplinarity and the Education Context

In the first part of this chapter, I explained that education provides the context for an examination of designer/scenographer positionality in performance making. This topic necessitates an interdisciplinary engagement with other fields. The application of knowledge and methods from different disciplines has the potential to expand the boundaries of a discipline, highlighting what Wagner calls 'blank spots' and 'blind spots' in knowledge; a concept I will explain fully in chapter three. Therefore, this study is uniquely placed to provide a new perspective on

designer/scenographer positionality in performance making through an examination of pedagogy and curriculum. I will now highlight four reasons why I have chosen to situate the research in the context of design/scenography education.

4.1 Scholarly Inquiry and Design/Scenography Education

The first reason for situating the study in design/scenography education is, as I shall show chapter two, that whilst the field of critical scholarly inquiry *about* design/scenography practices in performance has expanded since the late 1990s/early 2000s, inquiry about dimensions of design/scenography education (such as pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and so on) is under-theorised. I show in the literature review in chapter two that there is an absence of peer-reviewed literature concerned with these aspects of design/scenography education in the UK. This thesis aims to open up new perspectives on design/scenography education by addressing this absence

4.2 Professionalisation and Education

The second reason why design/scenography education is the focus for this study is that design/scenography education emerged as a response to a professionalising tendency in UK theatre in the 1930s. In chapters four and five, I examine the philosophy and practices of the London Theatre Studio (1936-1939), led by Michel Saint-Denis and George Devine. The model of design education that emerged from the London Theatre Studio provided the basis for the design course at the Old Vic Theatre School and the Motley Theatre Design Course (1966-2010). I argue that the Motley course is representative of a general professionalising

tendency in the theatre during this period. Education about, and training in, specialised forms of knowledge is central to the process of professionalisation. Torstendhal suggests that knowledge has a symbolic value in the form of institutionalised cultural capital.[43] These forms of capital, according to Frame, control and regulate entry to a profession for which those skills and knowledge are deemed essential.[44] The design course at the London Theatre Studio was not the first of its kind in the UK, but it was one of the first that integrated designer/scenographers in the ensemble. Although the Motley design archive has been preserved,[45] very little remains of either the original London Theatre Studio design course, or the subsequent Motley course, except for a collection of course exhibition fliers and personal letters from graduates of the course.[46] This perhaps explains why Alison Chitty describes the course as 'one of these great best kept secrets'.[47]

4.3 Education as a Site of Social Practices

The third reason for examining designer/scenographer agency through education is that pedagogies and curricula reflect normative ideas about being a

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[43] Rolf Torstendahl, 'Introduction: Promotion and Strategies of Knowledge-Based Groups', in The Formation of Professions: Knowledge, State and Strategy, ed. by Rolf Torstendahl and Michael C Burrage (London: Sage Publications, 1990), pp. 1–10 (pp. 4–7).
[44] Murray Frame, 'Commercial Theatre and Professionalisation in Late Imperial Russia', The Historical Journal, 48.4 (2005), 1025–53 (p. 1027).
[45] University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 'Motley Collection of Theatre and Costume Design' <http://imagesearchnew.library.illinois.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/motley> [accessed 21 March 2015].
[46] University of Bristol Theatre Collection, 'Motley Archive Collection', 2017 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatrecollection/library.html> [accessed 12 March 2017].
[47] Dominic Cavendish (Producer) *2nd July 04*, 'Alison Chitty Head of School at the Motley Theatre Design, 2nd July 2004' [podcast] <http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/interview-alison-chitty-the-head-of-school-at-the-motley-th/> [accessed 19 June 2015].

designer/scenographer and doing design/scenography. In this way, education can be described as a site of 'social practices', constituting social life, forming agents and realising structure in a mutually dependent cycle.[48] Baugh argues that education and theatre practice are mutually dependent:

> [T]he context of the theatre created the text - it created the performance and scenographic values suited to survive within its environment. But equally, the market place of this theatre also determined the syllabus of training; and that syllabus, in turn, determined the artistic values and attitudes of the work itself - a virtuous circle of artistic supply based upon precise artistic demand.[49]

Examining curricula and pedagogies has the potential to provide insights into design/scenography practices, and vice versa, and so I will explain the distinctions between these terms.

4.3.1 Pedagogy and Curriculum

I use the term *curriculum* to refer to what is taught or course of study, what Ellis refers to as the 'prescriptive curriculum'.[50] As well as the prescriptive curriculum there is what Margolis calls 'the hidden curriculum', 'hidden by a general social agreement not to see'.[51] I examine prescriptive and hidden curricula in this study.

I use the term *pedagogy* to refer to how something is taught, and by whom. Although pedagogy is often referred to in the singular, Zyngier advises that:

> [P]edagogy should in fact always be plural – pedagogies – to reflect

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[48] Lars Bo Kaspersen, Anthony Giddens: An Introduction to a Social Theorist (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000), p. 23.
[49] Christopher Baugh, 'English Scenography, Education and the Public Purse', *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, 4 (1998), 125–31 (p. 126).
[50] Arthur K Ellis, *Exemplars of Curriculum Theory* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 4.
[51] Eric Margolis, *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.

> reciprocity where teachers and students assume responsibility for self-questioning and recognizing and respecting difference and diversity.[52]

I define two dimensions of pedagogy. The first I call *the disciplinary dimension of pedagogy,* and the second aspect *the local dimension of pedagogy.* The disciplinary dimension of pedagogy is concerned with Shulman's concept of 'signature pedagogies'. These are pedagogic signatures that express the 'personalities, dispositions and cultures of their fields',[53] including 'what counts as knowledge in a field and how things become known'.[54] In chapter two, I examine the literature associated with creative and performing arts education to identify signature pedagogies that might be present in design/scenography education. As I shall show in chapter six, a significant finding of this study is that the signature pedagogies associated with design/scenography education are being eroded and impeded in the current educational context.

I use the term *local dimension of pedagogy*, to describe the pedagogic relations between educators and students. Bernstein proposes that there are three kinds of pedagogic relation; explicit, implicit and tacit. An explicit pedagogic relation is where there is a purposeful intention of a teacher to 'initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice' of a learner. Implicit pedagogic relations refer to when the teacher's intention from the point of view of the learner is invisible but is visible to the teacher. Tacit pedagogical relations occur where

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[52] David Zyngier, 'Culture and Pedagogy(Ies): (What) Have We Learned from and Since Alexander 2001', in *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment: Two Volume Set*, ed. by Dominic Wyse, Louise Hayward, and Jessica Pandya (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2019), pp. 171–85 (p. 181).
[53] Lee S Shulman, 'Signature Pedagogies in the Professions', *Daedelus*, Summer.3 (2005), 52–59 (pp. 52–53).
[54] Shulman, p. 54.

learning takes place but where neither party is aware of it having taken place.[55] Therefore, the study also examines visible and hidden dimensions of pedagogy.

Although I have separated education into pedagogy and curriculum, I recognise that, in practice, the two intersect. For example, Mock and Way draw attention to the ways in which curricula may be embodied in the experiences and practices of drama teacher/practitioners.[56] Embodied pedagogy is one of the signature pedagogies that I examine in more detail in chapter two.

4.4 Positionality

The fourth reason for situating the study in the context of education is that it provides one way to examine the positionality of designer/scenographers in performance making, and whether agency is enabled or constrained as a consequence. I am using the definition of positionality provided by Holland *et al*. because it evokes agency, through 'the identified action of a person':

> Positionality refers to the fact that personal activity (the identified action of a person) always occurs from a particular place in a social field of ordered and interrelated points or positions of possible activity.[57]

The social field that I examine is the organisation of performance making. Therefore, I examine how design/scenography education positions designer/scenographers in performance making and how this then shapes the

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[55] Basil Bernstein and Joseph Solomon, '"Pedagogy, Identity and the Construction of a Theory of Symbolic Control": Basil Bernstein Questioned by Joseph Solomon', British Journal of Sociology of Education, 20.2 (1999), 265–79 (p. 267).
[56] Roberta Mock and Ruth Way, 'Pedagogies of Theatre (Arts) and Performance (Studies)', Studies in Theatre and Performance, 25.3 (2005), 201–13 (p. 201).
[57] Dorothy Holland and others, Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 44.

expression and enactment of designer/scenographer agency. In chapter two, I examine scholarly literature about agency and conclude that agency has been conceptualised in the context of either/ or/ and separable, inseparable, subservient, dominant or interdependent relations with social structure. Hitlin and Elder criticise much of the scholarly literature concerned with agency because the term is deployed in non-specific ways.[58] So, in this study I examine three specific domains of agency. The first is 'authorial agency', or the perception of the designer/scenographer's contribution to the authorship of performance. The second is 'professional' agency, or how designer/scenographers are perceived as being able to influence, make choices, and take stances on their work. The third is 'identity' agency, or the capacity to act within socially prescribed role expectations associated with the occupational identity of designer/scenographer. Further explanation of these three agentic domains, and their relation to structure and power, are provided in chapter two.

Now that I have set out the topic, problem and questions that the study seeks to address, and I have established my reasons for locating this study in the context of design/scenography education, I will briefly summarise the methodology of the study.

5. Methodology

My methodological position in the research is located within an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. A

[58] Steven Hitlin and Glen H. Elder, 'Time, Self, and the Curiously Abstract Concept of Agency', *Sociological Theory*, 25.2 (2007), 170–91 (p. 171).

relativist ontology is the belief that reality is a finite subjective experience and nothing exists outside of our thoughts.[59] Therefore, from this perspective, reality cannot be distinguished from our experience of it. Additionally, having a subjectivist epistemology means recognising that any data generated by the study cannot be understood from a purely objective stance.[60] As I explain in chapter three, this methodological position matters because I am uniquely positioned in relation to this study. My unique position arises from my role as a Senior Lecturer in Work-Based Learning, and experience of working in higher education for twenty-five years. This is combined with my experience of being a student of design/scenography at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These dimensions of my experience contribute to the choice of topic, method and analysis.

I examine the expression and enactment of design/scenographer positionality and agency through two studies. In chapter five, I reconstruct the curriculum and pedagogy of the Motley course through analysis of the memories of graduates of the course, using the method of object elicitation.[61] Then, in chapter six, I analyse interviews with course leaders of current design/scenography courses, using the method of photo-interviewing.[62]

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[59] Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, 'Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, 3rd edn (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 1–32 (p. 21).
[60] Merry-Jo D. Levers, 'Philosophical Paradigms, Grounded Theory, and Perspectives on Emergence', *SAGE Open*, 3.4 (2013), 1–6 (p. 5).
[61] Susan E Bell, 'Objects, Memory and Narrative', *Workshop on Memory and Object Elicitation* (University of London, Goldsmiths New Cross, London, UK, July 4, 2013, 2013).
[62] Rosalind Hurworth, 'Photo-Interviewing for Research', *Social Research Update*, 2003, 1–4 (p. 1).

6. Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis makes three original contributions to knowledge. The first contribution to knowledge is methodological. This study is interdisciplinary drawing on the fields of drama and performance, theatre history, art and design, education studies and sociology. Specifically, examining design/scenography through the relationship between agency (designer/scenographer) and structure (performance organisation),[63] provides a theoretical framework to examine how design/scenography is situated in performance making. I assert that this is a valid tactic for making a methodological contribution to the field because, as Condee suggests, an interdisciplinary approach 'expands the boundaries of the discipline, critiques the premises of the discipline, and ultimately redefines the future of the discipline'.[64]

The second methodological contribution that this research makes to knowledge is that I have developed novel approaches to 'object elicitation'[65] in narrative inquiry, which I will explain in more detail in chapter three of this thesis. The absence of an archive associated with the Motley course necessitated a new approach to the reconstruction of the Motley course using the memories of Motley alumni.

The third contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes is to the scholarly fields of design/scenography and education, because the literature review in chapter

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[63] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).
[64] William F. Condee, 'The Future Is Interdisciplinary', *Theatre Survey*, 45.02 (2004), 235–40 (p. 235).
[65] Sophie Woodward, 'Object Interviews, Material Imaginings and Unsettling Methods: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding Materials and Material Culture', *Qualitative Research*, 16.4 (2015), 1–16 (p. 4).

two organises contemporary design/scenography literature into a series of inter-related discursive frames. It is anticipated that this will be of interest to scholars in the field because the approach seeks not to *define* design/scenography, but to *describe* the iterative features of notions of design/scenography. Second, the study addresses a gap in the literature associated with design/scenography education in the UK by transferring notions of signature pedagogies in the creative and performing arts to the field of design/scenography education. A significant contribution of this thesis lies in the contrast between the Motley Theatre Design Course case study, and the small study of contemporary design/scenography courses. As I shall show later in this thesis, the contrast highlights the negative impact of neoliberal arts and higher education policy on signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education, but also draws attention to the potential of these pedagogies to resist technicist models of learning.

A consideration of the contributions to knowledge that this thesis makes, necessitates engagement with the consideration of *who* benefits from the research. I anticipate that those who might benefit from this study include scholars of design/scenography and drama and performance educators. Furthermore, the methodological contributions of the study are transferable to other research contexts and so will be of interest to those engaged in object elicitation in narrative inquiry.

7. Limitations

There are some limitations to the study. The study was not intended to compare the Motley course with current design/scenography education but there are contrasts between them that warrant discussion. Whilst each case study arises

from a particular set of social and cultural conditions, there are contrasts in the ways that these conditions enable, or constrain, signature pedagogies associated with theatre, and art and design education. This was a significant finding of the study, that I reflect upon in more detail in the conclusion to the thesis.

The second aspect, which could be described as a limitation, but that I choose to frame as an awareness, is that this study diverges from previous doctoral studies about design/scenography because it does not focus on design/scenography practice per se, except where this illustrates an aesthetic style arising from positionality in performance making, as I have done in chapter four where I show the contrast between decorative design and 'poetic realism'.

Acknowledging the limitations of the study, raises questions about future areas of research that might emerge from, and build upon this study, which I will now summarise but address in more detail in final chapter of the thesis.

8. Further Lines of Inquiry

There are further lines of inquiry that arise from this study. These are; the lineage of the Motley course in contemporary design education; signature pedagogies in design/scenography education; career biographies of teachers of design/scenography; student experiences of contemporary design/scenography education and, agency and positionality of designer/scenographers in professional practice. I explain these in the concluding chapter to this thesis.

9. Chapter Summary

In **Chapter Two: Literature Review**, I undertake a 'scoping review' of

literature that aims to 'create an agenda for future research'[66] in design/scenography education. The review addresses three themes; conceptualisations of design/scenography and the conditions associated with the emergence and development of the design/scenography discipline; signature pedagogies discussed in creative and performing arts education literature; and concepts associated with the notion of 'agency'.

In **Chapter Three: Methodology**, I explain the methodology and methods of the study, using Vasilachis de Gialdino's framework for epistemological reflection,[67] addressing:

- how reality can be known
- the relationship between the knower and what is known
- the characteristics, the principles, the assumptions that guide the process of knowing and the achievement of findings.

In **Chapter Four: Professionalising the Designer**, I argue that the model of an integrated theatre company and school comprised of a company of 'ensembliers'[68] at the London Theatre Studio repositioned the designer/scenographer as a collaborative partner. I argue that six Motley principles for design/scenography emerge from this context:

1. Education should be enmeshed with an extended professional network
2. Costumes should assist the movement of actors on stage

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[66] Pat Thomson, 'Not All Literature "Reviews" Are the Same', *Patter*, 2013 <https://patthomson.net/2013/05/23/not-all-literature-reviews-are-the-same/> [accessed 17 September 2014].
[67] Irene Vasilachis de Gialdino, 'Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Qualitative Research', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10.2 (2009), 1–25.
[68] Michel Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style* (London; New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1960), p. 92.

3. Settings should accommodate, and be built around, the movement of body in space
4. Designers should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources
5. Design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble
6. Designer and design should serve the play.

At the London Theatre Studio, the designer/scenographer was integrated with the ensemble and education in the form of the combined company and school. This professionalised design/scenography by prescribing ways of doing design/scenography and of being a designer/scenographer through education. I argue that this positioning, and the rejection of decorative design/scenography between the wars in Britain, contributed towards a particular design aesthetic that Margaret Harris calls 'poetic realism'.

In **Chapter Five: Reconstructing the Motley Course,** I use the method of object elicitation in a focus group with Motley alumni to reconstruct the Motley Theatre Design Course. I conclude that the principles that emerged from Harris' experiences at the London Theatre Studio are embedded in the pedagogy and curriculum of the Motley course.

In **Chapter Six: Design/Scenography in an Expanding Field**, I conduct a thematic analysis of interviews with course leaders of current design/scenography courses in UK higher education. I identify the factors shaping design/scenography education and argue that neoliberal governance mechanisms in higher education and arts funding policies, emphasise 'the significance of contractual relations in the

marketplace'.[69] I propose that neoliberal policies constitute precarious subjectivities through processes of 'social insecurity, flexibility and continuous fear arising from the loss of stability'.[70] The impact of precarity is apparent in how designer/scenographer agency and positionality is expressed and enacted in pedagogies and curricula, and negatively impact upon signature pedagogies associated with design/scenography education.

In **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**, I conclude by restating the research problem that this thesis has attempted to address, returning to the research questions that guide the study, explaining the original contributions to knowledge that emerge from these, proposing new areas of research inquiry. In the final section of the chapter, I reflect upon the contrast between the Motley case study and the study of current design/scenography courses, arguing that a significant finding of the study is the negative impact of technicist models of teaching and learning upon signature pedagogies in design/scenography education.

10. Chapter One Conclusion

I have introduced the research problem that the study will address; to consider how education circumscribes normative ways of doing design/scenography and of being a designer/scenographer. In the next chapter I establish a framework of terms that emerge from the scholarly literature associated with design/scenography, models of learning, signature pedagogies in the creative and performing arts, and

[69] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 3.
[70] Bojana Kunst, 'The Institution between Precarization and Participation', *Performance Research*, 20.4 (2015), 6–13 (p. 6).

agency. The thesis will shall show how agency, pedagogy, and positionality intersect to shape the occupational identity and practices associated with being a designer/scenographer.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter to undertake a 'scoping review' of literature that will 'create an agenda for future research' in design/scenography education.[1] In the previous chapter, I introduced the topic and purpose of the study, explaining that pedagogies and curricula provide one way to examine normative practices and identities associated with design/scenography. Therefore, the topic areas addressed in the review arise directly from this purpose. There are three topics or themes that will be addressed in the review. The first topic is concerned with how design/scenography, and the role of the design/scenographer, is conceptualised in the literature. Additionally, this part considers the emergence of a critical discipline associated with design/scenography and debates about design/scenography education. The second topic examines signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts educations, and their relation to constructivist and social constructivist models of learning. The final part of the review examines concepts associated with the notion of 'agency'. The aim here is to identify the specific types of agency that will be examined in this study, namely; authorial, professional and identity agency. In this thesis, I locate the concept of identity agency in the context of the occupational role of designer/scenographer.

2. Concepts of Design/Scenography Education

In the introduction to this thesis I explained that I have chosen to organise conceptualisations of design/scenography that arise from the scholarly literature

[1] Pat Thomson.

into five ‘discursive frames’. This tactic is adopted to manage the plurality of terms associated with ‘design’ and ‘scenography’ and is informed by Tromans’ tactic of the deleuzoguattarian concept of haecceity. Tromans describes haecceity as a mode of ‘individuation’ that is beyond ‘a person, subject, thing or substance’; it is ‘the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate’.[2] As I have already stated, I do not attempt to address ontological questions about the essence of design or scenography in this review, but aim to problematise notions of essence associated with ‘design’ and ‘scenography’. Before I introduce the five discursive frames associated with design/scenography conceptualisations, I will first consider the etymological roots of scenography to show how these have evolved and expanded in the contemporary context.

2.1 Scenography: Etymology

Howard states that the word scenography is derived from the Greek ‘sceno-grafika’.[3] The term is associated with the skene, a small platform to the rear of the performance space in ancient Greek performance. Brockett *et al.* suggest that the early ‘skene’ or ‘hut/tent’ provided a changing space for the single actor in early Greek drama, but this later became a permanent structure.[4] The second part of the word ‘graphia’ means ‘to draw’. Howard interprets the term to mean ‘the writing of the stage space’ or ‘l’ecriture scénique’.[5]

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[2] Tromans, p. 195.
[3] Pamela Howard, ‘What Is Scenography? Or What’s in a Name?’, *Theatre Design and Technology*, 37.3 (2001), 12–16 (p. 14).
[4] Oscar. G Brockett, Margaret Mitchell, and Linda Hardberger, *Making the Scene: A History of Stage Design and Technology in Europe and the United States* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2010), pp. 7–8.
[5] Pamela Howard, ‘What Is Scenography? Or What’s in a Name?’, p. 14.

Maitland suggests that the term originates in Artistotle's *Poetics*, in 335BC, in a footnote that credits Sophocles with the introduction of 'skenographia',[6] which Whalley's translation of *Poetics* defines as 'scene-painting'.[7] However, Maitland says that Aristotle does not explain what skenographia is. Łarionow agrees, suggesting that the reason for this is that Aristotle neglects visual dimensions of drama, perhaps because he makes the claim that dramatic catharsis is only possible with works of 'great literary value'.[8] Maitland cites analogous Greek terms to argue that skenographia refers to 'a process of artifice, distinct from the built structure of the theatre'.[9] Similarly, Brockett *et al*. suggest that 'skenographia' would have been 'decorative rather than architectural'.[10] Keuls is more specific, saying that 'skiagraphia' describes an illusory painting technique that uses patches of pure colours, producing effects through 'optical colour fusion'.[11] Hoesch disputes Aristotle's statement that scenography originated with Sophocles, preferring Vitruvius' claim that Agatharcus, a Greek painter, was the originator of scenography. She argues that the term refers to a painted back wall of a wooden stage construction, that depicts fictional places.[12] Brockett *et al*. conclude that the disagreement about the origins of the term suggest that advances in scene painting occurred between the date of Sophocles' first play and Aeschylus' death twelve years later. They claim that Apollodurus improved the methods of Agatharcus by

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[6] Judith Maitland, 'Controversy and Clues: Recovering and Recreating Graeco-Roman Scenography', Theatre Arts Journal: Studies in Scenography and Performance, 1.1 (2009), 92–109 (p. 92).
[7] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics: Translated and with a Commentary by George Whalley*, ed. by John Baxter and Patrick Atherton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 61.
[8] Łarionow, p. 115.
[9] Maitland, p. 92.
[10] Brockett, Mitchell, and Hardberger, p. 10.
[11] Eva Keuls, 'Skiagraphia Once Again', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 79.1 (1975), 1–16 (p. 11).
[12] Nicola Hoesch, 'Scenography', in *Brill's New Pauly Antiquity Volumes*, ed. by Hubert Cancik and others (London: Brill, 2018).

developing chiaroscuro and was the first known skiographer or 'shadow-painter'.[13]

D'arcy suggests that there is an earlier reference to 'scene painters' or 'sceno grafika', in Plato's *The Republic*,[14] in 380 BC in Desmond Lee's translation,[15] but other translations refer simply to 'painter'.[16] Plato distinguishes between painters and carpenters, to illustrate the concept of mimesis. He says that carpenters create using their knowledge and skill, whereas painters *imitate*. Pappas points out that although mimesis is often translated as *imitation*, it may be more accurate to translate this as 'representation', concluding that the idea of the painter is more accurately understood as a 'representational painter'.[17] Brockett *et al*. claim that there is evidence to suggest that towards the end of the Hellenistic period, painters had started to use 'intuitive' perspective on the stage; where objects are rendered smaller the nearer they are to the horizon.[18]

Therefore, the etymological root of 'scenography' has associations with representational painting where paint effects were used to depict different locations that were distinct from the physical architecture of the performance space. However, McKinney and Palmer point out that the Greek 'theatron' is both a place to see, and an 'auditorium' or a place to hear. They suggest that these notions of scenography tend to 'treat scenography as a series of static images rather than 'a

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[13] Brockett, Mitchell, and Hardberger, p. 7.
[14] Eamon D'arcy, 'Scenography from the Inside', *Australasian Drama Studies*, 61.61 (2012), 76–83 (p. 76).
[15] Plato, 'The Republic, Translated by Benjamin Jowett', *Internet Classics Archive at MIT*, 2018 <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.mb.txt> [accessed 10 July 2018].
[16] Plato and Stephen Watt, *Republic: Translated by John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan*, ed. by Tom Griffith (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997).
[17] Nickolas Pappas, 'Plato on Poetry: Imitation or Inspiration?', *Philosophy Compass*, 7.10 (2012), 669–78 (p. 671).
[18] Brockett, Mitchell, and Hardberger, p. 6.

fluid and dynamic event'.[19] The concept of scenography as a fluid and dynamic event is associated with modern and contemporary concepts of scenography, but the roots of scenography emerge from practices that are associated with décor and 'design'.

The modern use of scenography in the twentieth century is associated with Josef Svoboda, a Czech designer/scenographer.[20] Svoboda uses the term to describe the designer/scenographer's role in the 'complete creation' rather than simply 'framing the dramatic work'.[21] Most Czech designer/scenographers were trained as architects[22] and therefore a scenographer is conceptualised as 'defining, controlling and transforming space'.[23] Theatres in Communist former Czechoslovakia were subject to strict censorship rules relating to theatre scripts. However, performance was not censored, and so design/scenography was used to show alternative, and subversive, meanings in performance.[24] Designs that promoted a 'complex metaphorical structure', defined as 'Action Design', were favoured.[25] This approach necessitated close collaborations between designer/scenographers and directors. The international profile of Czech scenography led to the creation of the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) in 1967, a festival of scenography and theatre architecture.[26] The PQ has taken place every four years since its inception and

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[19] McKinney and Palmer, p. 17.
[20] David Jays, 'Josef Svoboda', *The Guardian London* (April 22 2002) <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/apr/22/guardianobituaries> [accessed 30 June 2016]
[21] Josef Svoboda, *The Secret of Theatrical Space: The Memoirs of Josef Svoboda*, ed. by Jarka Burian (Tonbridge: Applause Theatre Books, 1993), p. 14.
[22] Jarka M Burian, *Modern Czech Theatre* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2000), p. 7.
[23] Svoboda, p. 7.
[24] Brockett, Mitchell, and Hardberger, p. 295.
[25] Dennis Christilles and Delbert Unruh, 'The Semiotics of Action Design', *Theatre Topics*, 6.2 (1996), 121–41 (pp. 121–22).
[26] Arts and Theatre Institute and Prague Quadrennial, *50 Years of Prague Quadrennial*, ed. by Ondřej Svoboda, 1st edn (Prague: The Arts and Theatre Institute, 2017), p. 8.

continues to provide an international focus for design/scenography.

2.2 The Field of Design/Scenography

I will demonstrate through this review that there is an absence of scholarly writing about design/scenography education; about the history of the teaching of design/scenography, the pedagogies associated with this and the development of the design/scenography curriculum. However, scholarly critical writing about the metascenographic dimensions of design/scenography in performance has grown since the millennium, contributing to an emerging field of scholarly enquiry *about* the affect/effect of design/scenography, and its practices. McKinney and Palmer suggest that literature prior to 2000 emphasises the 'impact and role of the person of scenographer'.[27] This emphasis may have arisen, Łarionow suggests, because design/scenography was conceived of as an applied art undertaken by 'established artists-painters'.[28] The emphasis on visual-material elements of scenography privileges the individual artistry of the designer/scenography over the phenomenon of design/scenography in performance.

Spencer associates the display of creative artefacts, like model boxes and drawings, to designer/scenographers' desire for recognition for their work. However, he makes the case that the artefacts themselves do not represent design/scenography:

> The set is not the thing. The costume is not the thing. The object is not the thing. In Fine Art, the object usually is the thing, but scenography is not Fine Art, despite the fact that the boundaries of the disciplines are shifting. Scenography may want to be Fine Art because of the

[27] McKinney and Palmer, p. 7.
[28] Łarionow, p. 121.

> accompanying gravitas. That's another reason for scenography's desire to display objects?[29]

Design/scenography was conceptualised as an applied art and the etymological origins of these terms support this notion. Literature published prior to the emergence of this new critical scholarly field is concerned with the artist-as-designer/scenographer. Gröndahl suggests that the preoccupation with artistry may also have arisen from the treatment of 'scenic apparatus' as 'an unproblematic means of communicating significations and ideas'.[30] The professionalisation of the designer/scenographer through education contributed to the emergence and visibility of design/scenography education. However, the critical engagement with processual and experiential dimensions of design/scenography is a relatively new phenomenon. For example, in 2011 McKinney and Iball drew attention to 'the emergent nature of scenographic research'.[31] This contributed to the emergence of critical scholarly environment where design/scenography is theorised on a 'meta-scenographical level' or 'a discussion about scenographic apparatus by means of scenography itself'.[32] Scorzin calls this the 'metareferential turn' in design/scenography.[33] McKinney, writing in 2000, identifies parallels with Erika Fischer-Lichte's 'paradigm of literary scholarship' where scholarly attention shifts from locating the meaning in a literary work, to addressing questions of how a work

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[29] Michael Spencer, 'Documentation as Scenography', *Performing Documents Workshop* (Bristol, UK 12-14 April 2013).
[30] Laura Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', *Nordic Theatre Studies*, 28.2 (2010), 8–18 (p. 17).
[31] Joslin McKinney and Helen Iball, 'Researching Scenography', in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 111–36 (p. 115).
[32] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 17.
[33] Scorzin, p. 259.

comes into being.[34]

The metareferential turn in scenography prompts examination of the place that scenography occupies as a discipline. For example, writing in 2009, McKinney and Butterworth note the marginalisation of design/scenography within the field of theatre and performance.[35] Design/scenography is often placed at the margins of, or between, disciplines. For example, Łarionow describes design/scenography as a 'liminal art'[36] and D'arcy suggests that it is positioned in-between 'painting, architecture and visual arts'.[37] Similarly, Scorzin notes the 'transdisciplinary, transmedial and transgeneric character' of design/scenography.[38]

McKinney and Palmer suggest that design/scenography encompasses different practices, including autonomous art practices, new spaces for performance, and engagement with 'social as well as the cultural dimensions of contemporary experience'.[39] McKinney and Iball observe that, as design/scenography expands, 'It can be difficult to determine where the boundaries of the field are drawn and invigorating to question if they need to be drawn at all'.[40] As Bernstein argues, where a discipline is strongly bounded 'the rules of exclusion are strong'. In contrast, a 'weakly bounded' discipline has weak rules of exclusion.[41] Jackson suggests this porosity arises from the 'imprecise boundaries of

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[34] Joslin McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', *Scenography International*, January 2000, pp. 1–13 (p. 9).
[35] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 8.
[36] Łarionow, p. 16.
[37] D'arcy, p. 78.
[38] Scorzin, p. 261.
[39] McKinney and Palmer, p. 2.
[40] McKinney and Iball, p. 133.
[41] Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control: Volume 1 Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 180–81.

the theatrical event'.[42] Therefore, as a field of study, design/scenography might be said to be weakly bounded, expansive and expanding, as it embraces different practices. However, Jackson cautions against conceptualising disciplines in a duality of disciplinary vs. trans/inter/cross disciplinary. She suggests that interdisciplinary is often used as 'a facile index of the "new"', with disciplines construed as 'old'. Instead of defining the boundaries of a discipline by asking what is inside and outside, she suggests we should also pay particular attention to 'what is "in" and what is "out"'.[43]

In summary, scholarly literature about design/scenography has moved from a preoccupation with the artist as designer/scenographer to 'a discussion about scenographic apparatus by means of scenography itself'.[44] The boundaries of the discipline are porous, expansive and interdisciplinary and later in the thesis I shall show how these dimensions impact upon the positionality and agency of designer/scenographers in performance making. In the next part of the chapter I identify key contributors to the literature, before introducing the five discursive frames that are designed to express the various conceptualisations of design/scenography that emerge from the literature.

2.3 Contributors to the Design/Scenography Literature

Pamela Howard's book, *What is Scenography?* was published in 2001. In it, Howard describes scenography as 'the creation of the stage space' which is 'the

[42] Jackson, p. 6.
[43] Jackson, p. 7.
[44] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 17.

joint statement of the director and the visual artist'.[45] Howard expands upon an earlier article where she describes scenography as 'the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors and spectators that contributes to an original creation'.[46] In the afterword, Howard identifies her contribution as making scenography and scenographers 'visible', saying 'We have come out'.[47]

Arnold Aronson has been contributing to debates about scenography since the early 1980s. In *Looking into the Abyss,* published in 2005, Aronson considers postmodern design, lighting, found spaces and theatre architecture, and the growth of technology and recorded media in live performance.[48] Furthermore, Aronson reflects on the changing field of design/scenography in a series of journal articles about the Prague Quadrennial (PQ). Aronson's reflections on the PQ have influenced this doctoral study because he considers how the PQ reflects changes in design/scenography practices.[49]

Joslin McKinney appears to have had similar concerns to Pamela Howard, arguing in 2000 that 'theatre design [should be seen] as a central rather than peripheral aspect of theatrical performance'.[50] McKinney is concerned with the haptic and experiential dimensions of design/scenography, which brings renewed focus on the role of the spectator/participant in performance. In collaboration with others, McKinney has also explored 'the potential for an expressive and affective

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[45] Pamela Howard, *What Is Scenography?* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), p. xix.
[46] Pamela Howard, 'What Is Scenography? Or What's in a Name?', p. 16.
[47] Pamela Howard, *What Is Scenography?*, p. 128.
[48] Arnold Aronson, *Looking into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2005).
[49] Arnold Aronson, 'The 1991 Prague Quadrennial', *The Drama Review: TDR*, 37.1 (1993), 61–73 (p. 1).
[50] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 1.

interaction between the designed object and the human subject'[51] by generating designed, and embodied, objects for performance. McKinney and Butterworth's 2009 publication *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* begins by defining the 'territory' of design/scenography.[52] The authors revisit definitions of design/scenography, examining experiential and processual dimensions of performance, a theme which is continued in *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design.* Co-authored with Scott Palmer in 2017, the publication defines scenography as 'a mode of encounter and exchange founded on spatial and material relations between bodies, objects and environments'.[53] McKinney and Palmer's definition informs one of the discursive frames described in this review; *design/scenography as mode of encounter.* McKinney's interest in design/scenography in performance informs a co-authored chapter with Iball in Baz Kershaw's book *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. They observe that design/scenography research has been concerned with production ephemera and artefacts and they propose a transdisciplinary approach that engages with the live and experiential dimensions of performance.[54]

There are other significant contributors to the field of scenography. Notably, Christopher Baugh who, in *Theatre, Performance and Technology: The Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century*, examines the relationship between theatre technologies and design/scenography practice.[55] Other contributors

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[51] Alice Bayliss and others, 'Emergent Objects: Designing Through Performance', *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 3.2 & 3 (2007), 269–79 (p. 269).
[52] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 9.
[53] McKinney and Palmer, p. 2.
[54] McKinney and Iball, pp. 112–14.
[55] Christopher Baugh, *Theatre, Performance and Technology: The Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century*, *Theatre and Performance Practices* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

included in this review are Phillip Butterworth, Thea Brejzek, Laura Gröndahl, Kathleen Irwin, Sonja Lotker, Gay McCauley, Scott Palmer, Pamela Scorzin, David Shearing, Steve Tromans, Barbora Příhodová and Christine White. I will now identify contributors to design/scenography education literature.

2.4 Contributors to the Design/Scenography Education Literature

Richard M. Isackes is an American theatre academic, who writes about processes of design/scenography in design/scenography education. Isackes' work has influenced this study because he examines pedagogy from the standpoint of a practitioner/educator. In Finland, Laura Gröndahl has published journal articles concerned with design/scenography education. Gröndahl is influential to this study because she examines the pedagogy of collaborative and processual aspects of performance.

In the UK, there is an absence of published material about design/scenography education. Baugh published an article in 1998 that addresses 'English Scenography' and education, where he examines the relationship between discipline, funding and the emergence of a multi-skilled, entrepreneurial theatre professional; a 'jack of all trades'.[56] Although this article is beyond the time-frame of this literature review, this article is important because it locates a critical turn in design/scenography education and scholarship alongside the disappearance of professional career structures in the UK. More recently, Baugh returns to some of these earlier questions in a chapter in McKinney and Palmer's *Scenography*

[56] Baugh, 'English Scenography, Education and the Public Purse', p. 129.

Expanded. Baugh's work has been influential to this study because he considers the organisation of disciplines within academic institutions, and the way that this influences design/scenography education.

Now that I have identified key contributors to the field of design/scenography literature, and design/scenography education, I will now move on to identify debates in design/scenography education.

2.5 Design/Scenography Education Literature

In the introduction to this thesis, I explained that one of the contributions to knowledge that this thesis makes is that it documents design/scenography education in the UK. Isackes comments on the absence of published material associated with design/scenography education in the United States:

> [T]here is almost no public - by that I mean published - discourse on the pedagogy of performance design. What little writing there is deals with either the quotidian concerns of production practice or, when it ventures into considerations of how work is developed, relegates it to the uncritical and mysterious realms of intuition and emotional response - terrains that remain conveniently inscrutable.[57]

There have been some attempts to map design/scenography education. For example, Łarionow refers to a 2009 conference in Paris entitled, *Qu'est-ce que la scénographie?* She reports that the conference proceedings include a map of scenography departments in France, along with a description of their teaching methods,[58] but I have been unable to locate this publication. In the UK, Anna Farthing authored a report for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) that reports

[57] Richard M Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', *Theatre Topics*, 18.1 (2008), 41–53 (p. 52).
[58] Łarionow, p. 120.

on:

> [T]he provision of education and training in higher education and elsewhere, for those seeking careers in technical theatre within the performing arts.[59]

The report is useful because it describes technical theatre training in the UK but it does not critically examine the position of design/scenography education. Many of the key debates that I highlight in this review emerge from tangential references to design/scenography education. I will now summarise some of the key debates that emerge about design/scenography education in the literature.

2.6 The Emergence of Design/Scenography Education

Gröndahl suggests that design/scenography education emerged in Finland because the status of the designer/scenographer was elevated from 'an artisan set-painter to an artistic designer requiring a university-level degree'.[60] Rebellato makes a similar argument about the UK describing a process of professionalisation that began in British theatre between the wars that was consolidated after World War II.[61] Baugh argues that designer/scenographer education originated in the art school conservatoire.[62] McKinney agrees, saying that designer/scenographers were

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[59] Anna Farthing, *Mapping Technical Theatre Arts Training (Research Report)*, 2012 <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/disciplines/ddm/HEADDM-Farthing(2012)MappingTechTheatreTraining.pdf> [accessed 13 July 2018].
[60] Laura Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', *Nordic Theatre Studies*, 27.2 (2015), 86–103 (p. 88).
[61] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 94–111.
[62] Christopher Baugh, '"Devices of Wonder": Globalizing Technologies in the Process of Scenography', in *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*, ed. by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), pp. 23–37 (p. 35).

typically educated in an 'art school environment'.[63] Isackes suggests that conservatoire education is primarily concerned with the education of the individual artist and that the language of design/scenography education; 'line, shape, volume, color [sic], texture, and pattern',[64] originates from a fine art tradition. This vocabulary is inadequate, he argues, because it does not capture 'performative functionality or transformational reception' and that 'designs are critiqued as if they were stand-alone works of art, and not as parts of a performative structure'.[65] Similarly, Gröndahl suggests that the visual arts tradition 'permeates the history of scenography education',[66] despite the fundamental differences between the performative arts and the visual arts.

Baugh suggests that design/scenography education has migrated from the conservatoire to the university and, in so doing, has introduced 'historical contextualization' and 'theoretical underpinning' to design/scenography curricula.[67] Placing scenography in the 'questing, exploratory environment of research-led higher education' emphasises, according to McKinney and Palmer, the exploration of 'not simply what [scenography] is, but what it does and how it does it'.[68] As Baugh suggests, there has been a transition from the 'technical skills of practical realization' to 'a Gesamtkunstwerk articulation of the act of theatre and performance'.[69]

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[63] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 8.
[64] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 53.
[65] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 49.
[66] Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', p. 87.
[67] Baugh, '"Devices of Wonder": Globalizing Technologies in the Process of Scenography', p. 35.
[68] McKinney and Palmer, p. 20.
[69] Baugh, '"Devices of Wonder": Globalizing Technologies in the Process of Scenography', p. 35.

The metascenographic turn in the field is reflected in the growth of doctoral submissions in the UK. For example, the British Library's etheses online service, ETHOS, reveals a significant growth since the late 1990s; with thirty-two theses that include scenography in the title, published since the millennium. Additionally, the previous twenty years have also seen the emergence of scenography research working groups within theatre and performance research associations. For, example, the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA). The focus of this working group includes 'fluid discussions around definitions of scenography in an evolving field'.[70] The International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), established a scenography working group in 1994, that focusses on the 'history, theory, aesthetics and practice of scenography - design for and as performance'.[71] Performance Studies International (PSi) includes a 'Performance + Design' working group, that 'focuses on the praxis of performing design and designing performance'.[72] Despite this growth in scholarly concern with the affect/effect of design/scenography and design/scenography history and practice, there remains an absence of scholarly writing about design/scenography education history, curriculum or pedagogy.

Given the emergence of the metascenographic turn the use of the phrase 'technical training' is problematic. The notion of vocational, technical training in

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[70] Theatre and Performance Research Association, 'TaPRA Scenography Working Group', *Theatre and Performance Research Association Website*, 2018 <http://tapra.org/tapra-profiles/scenography/> [accessed 3 April 2018].
[71] International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), 'Scenography Working Group', *International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) Website*, 2018 <https://www.iftr.org/working-groups/scenography> [accessed 3 April 2018].
[72] Performance Studies International (PSi), 'Performance + Design Working Group', *Performance Studies International (PSi) Website*, 2018 <http://www.psi-web.org/about/working-groups/> [accessed 3 April 2018].

scenography is addressed in the opening sections of Farthing's report. She argues that this term should encompass 'the widest range of roles with practical application, rather than in any pejorative sense'. However, the report then makes a clear distinction between training and education:

> 'Training' is important, but for HE institutions offering full-time courses we need to be thinking about an education that will go well beyond the first job and prepare graduates for a future we cannot predict [...] This means a much broader sense of what we are trying to achieve for students - qualities such as imagination, problem solving, collaboration, research, communication.[73]

Education is conceived as having the potential to equip students with a set of complex skills such as imagination, problem-solving and research, going beyond the procedural and technical concerns of the vocational domain. One reason for an emphasis on technical, vocational training is that it may be associated with the technical development of the discipline in the twentieth century. For example, Smalley argues that the growth of theatre technologies in the twentieth century led to an 'equipment-based pedagogy' whereby the effective operation of equipment become 'fundamental to the teaching and learning, sometimes to the exclusion of all other material'.[74]

Locating design/scenography in a technical/vocational domain has consequences for the professional identities and practices of designer/scenographers. For example, writing in 2000, McKinney notes that the traditional theory/practice distinction in design/scenography education restricts the

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[73] Farthing, p. 7.
[74] Michael Smalley, 'Unity, Contrast and Topology as the Three Coordinates of Scenography', in *Compass Points: The Locations, Landscapes and Coordinates of Identities in Contemporary Performance Making, Australasian Association for Drama Theatre & Performance Studies (ADSA) 2012 Conference Proceedings*, ed. by Bree Hadle and Caroline Heim (Queensland: Queensland University of Technology, 2012), pp. 1–7 (p. 1).

potential for collaboration in performance making. She argues that the separation of the 'highly practical' technical arts from the 'highly theoretical' training of directors and dramaturges, serves to inhibit collaboration and exclude designer/scenographers from engagement with dramaturgical aspects of productions.[75]

McKinney reflects on the place of design/scenography within the academy, suggesting that courses are either located within the disciplines of art and design or theatre/performance. She proposes that courses located within art and design tend to emphasise 'the development of an individual aesthetic with the emphasis on textual analysis and studio skills'[76] but this excludes collaboration in the performance making process. In contrast, where a course is located within a theatre department, students have opportunities to be involved in productions but design/scenography is often treated like 'a service course' to other courses within the department.[77] McKinney's notion of design/scenography being 'in service' reflects Isackes' observation that the physical organisation of faculties mirrors hierarchical organising in performance making:

> [T]here was a hierarchy of faculty offices that roughly mimicked the power dynamics governing departmental productions; for example, the acting and directing faculty were thought to be the most powerful because they decided who would receive roles […] these faculty had the largest offices […] the least powerful faculty were those in design and technology, who were relegated to offices on the second floor that were quite removed from the foyer.[78]

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[75] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 8.
[76] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 10.
[77] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 10.
[78] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 47.

In more recent years, things are changing. McKinney *et al*. contrast student involvement in PQ 1975 with PQ 2015. In 1975 the emphasis was on 'apprenticeship' but at the 2015 PQ early career practitioners are described as engaging in an 'active and dialogic mode of knowledge creation'.[79] There is a change of emphasis from apprentice to collaborative co-author.

Mock and Way observe that distinctions are made between education/training and theory/practice in theatre and performance education. They refer to Jon McKenzie's notion of the 'liminal norm' or the occupation of the ground between seeming contradictory notions. They say:

> [W]e are uncomfortable with the polarization of the terms 'theory' and 'practice', even as we link them together through an assertion of their interdependence. It is no coincidence that this echoes our concerns about the implied separations of 'art' from 'study' and 'theatre' from 'performance'.[80]

Conquergood identifies the 'betwixt and between' nature of performance studies as having radical potential. He draws on Michel de Certeau's aphorism of 'what the map cuts up, the story cuts across' to describe 'transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge' between dominant forms of knowledge or 'the map' and 'practical, embodied, and popular' forms of knowledge or 'the story'.[81] The 'map' is concerned with *knowing that* and *knowing about*, whereas the 'story' is concerned with *knowing how* and *knowing who*. One way of addressing this contradiction is proposed by Weigel-Doughty, of 'theory in

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[79] Barbora Příhodová, Joslin McKinney, and Sodja Lotker, 'The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2015', *Theatre and Performance Design*, 2.1–2 (2016), 5–16 (p. 7).
[80] Mock and Way, p. 205.
[81] Dwight Conquergood, 'Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research', *The Drama Review*, 46.2 (2002), 145–56 (p. 145).

practice' which is a model where academic understanding is grafted onto technical skills development. She argues that 'it is a disservice to isolate the vocational and academic aspects of theatre studies since each shapes the other'.[82]

In summary then, the design/scenography literature distinguishes between education/theory and training/vocation, which arises from the emergence of the discipline from the art school/conservatoire. In this context, the emphasis is on apprenticeship and the acquisition of skills. This contrasts with education that is concerned with the metascenographic dimensions of design/scenography. The literature identifies some consequences arising from this distinction. The art school/conservatoire model places emphasis on creative artefacts and individual artistry rather than collaborative and processual aspects of design/scenography. However, the disciplinary location of courses in higher education may not have addressed what some see as the problem of the isolation and separation of design/scenography from performance. Now that I have explored the origins of the field, I will briefly address another concern that emerges from the design/scenography education literature which is the role of practitioner/educators in design/scenography education.

Clarke suggests that there has been a migration of theatre practitioner-researchers into UK higher education since the late 1990s. He proposes that this arises from the insecurity of Arts Council funding for practitioners. Clarke describes practitioner/educators as 'parasites', a 'refugee colony' who take

[82] Gretchen Weigel-Doughty, 'Towards the Artist-Scholar: Theory in Practice - a Theatrical Model for Higher Education', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education Humanities in Higher Education*, 1.2 (2002), 205–19 (p. 207).

'economic and cultural refuge in the university'.[83] Isackes reflects upon a similar situation in the United States:

> Those of us who were committed to working in live theatre figured out sooner or later that jobs in colleges and universities not only offered decent salaries and benefits but, in most cases, encouraged us to continue parallel careers in the professional regional theatre - a sector that to an increasing degree was supported either directly or indirectly by colleges and universities.[84]

Isackes explains that most design/scenography for live theatre in the United States is produced by designer/academics. He suggests that the emergence of the practitioner/educator has effectively subsidised the design/scenography profession, making this unsustainable as a career choice.[85]

In the UK, Clarke reflects upon the impact of the commodification of knowledge on creative practice within the academy in the UK, noting that this influences performance practices:

> Can the 'refugee colony' of practitioner researchers, of which I am one, retain the subversive potential 'to be in but not of the university', to steal into the academy and poach its resources, to intervene, as Conquergood claimed? Or do we borrow from the university solely for the university's benefit? As a virtue of being incorporated in the neoliberal institution, are our subjectivities produced and shaped, such that, whether we are practising inside or outside, we are of the university, embodying ways of thinking, desires and aspirations that mimic institutional drives, values and vision?[86]

Isackes also reflects on the compromises caused by the retreat into the academy where theatre credits are no longer associated with 'actual dollars' but with 'academic promotion and tenure'. He suggests there has been an increase in

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[83] Paul Clarke, 'The Impact Market', *Performance Research*, 20.4 (2015), 112–21 (p. 115).
[84] Richard M Isackes, 'The Design Dilemma', *American Theatre*, 26.2 (2009), 34–42 (p. 35).
[85] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', pp. 96–97.
[86] Clarke, p. 120.

the number of design/scenography courses in the United States; 'there are too few potential students, too few potential jobs, and perhaps too many programs'.[87] This sentiment is shared by Howard:

> Now of course there are thousands and thousands of young people coming into study theatre design in one way or another and nobody knows how they can possibly be employed.[88]

So far, I have summarised key debates about education that emerge from the design/scenography literature. Before I move onto the discursive frames that emerge from conceptualisations of design/scenography, I will first identify what is included and excluded from this part of the review.

Writing in 2000, McKinney identifies four types of literature concerned with theatre design/scenography:

> (i) Handbooks or manuals [concerned with practical application of design skills]
>
> (ii) Anthologies [Of design practice]
>
> (iii) Lavishly illustrated "coffee table" books
>
> (iv) Critical analyses of the work of designers.[89]

There has been an increase in critical scholarly literature since McKinney's review in 2000. This review considers book publications, chapters in books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, selected unpublished doctoral theses and examples of grey literature,[90] published since 2000, excepting one or two significant publications.

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[87] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', p. 97.
[88] Pamela Howard *Interviewed by Kate Harris*, 9 November 2005.
[89] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', pp. 4–5.
[90] Dominic J. Farace and Joachim Schopfel, 'Introduction: Grey Literature', in *Grey Literature in Library and Information Studies* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 1–8 (p. 1).

In 2000, McKinney observed:

> There is much material which implicitly recognises the impact and value of the work of the designer, but a more clearly stated and conscious methodology is needed [to better understand] 'meaning-production'' […] There is a need to investigate and articulate a greater theoretical insight into the intellectual and philosophical aspects of design for the theatre.[91]

In contrast, Baugh observes in 2017:

> [T]he most significant expansion and the most radical re-visioning of practice has been the conjoining over the last decade of scenography with academic research and scholarly enquiry.[92]

Since McKinney's review, journals dedicated to design/scenography have emerged, for example *Scenography International*, *Theatre Arts Journal: Studies in Scenography and Performance*, *Theatre and Performance Design* and *Studies in Costume and Performance*. Now that I have defined the terms of the review I will now define five discursive frames that emerge from the design/scenography literature.

2.7 Five Discursive Frames of Design/Scenography

In the introduction to this review, I introduced Collins and Nisbet's notion of the discursive frame. They propose that the notion of a discursive frame recognises a convergence of 'distinct yet overlapping practices'.[93] The five discursive frames I will define are:

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[91] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 9.
[92] Baugh, '"Devices of Wonder": Globalizing Technologies in the Process of Scenography', p. 35.
[93] Collins and Nisbet, p. 2.

- Design/scenography as 'l'ecriture scenique'[94]
- Design/scenography as 'spatial dramaturgy'[95]
- Design/scenography as 'mode of encounter'[96]
- Design/scenography as 'vagrancy'[97]
- Design/scenography as organising mechanism.

2.7.1 Design/Scenography as L'ecriture Scénique

I explained earlier in this thesis that Howard uses the expression 'l'ecriture scenique', or 'the writing of the stage space', to describe design/scenography.[98] Similarly, Kerkoven calls it 'an act of writing the stage'.[99] It is curious that literary metaphors are used about design/scenography when the scenographic turn is associated with a turn from the literary to the visual. It seems that literary metaphors are used to emphasise authorial, processual, dialogic dimensions of design/scenography, as I shall now illustrate.

Kerkhoven suggests that literary metaphors, like writing, imply a 'dynamic conception of designed space as changeable, transitory and involved in a dialogical relationship with its users'.[100] Similarly, Gröndahl describes design/scenography as a 'semiotic process of successive readings and writings' between scenographer and

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[94] Pamela Howard, *What Is Scenography?*, p. 125.
[95] Sodja Lotker and Richard Gough, 'On Scenography: Editorial', *Performance Research*, 18.3 (2013), 3–6 (p. 5).
[96] McKinney and Palmer, p. 2.
[97] Benedict Anderson, p. 109.
[98] Pamela Howard, 'What Is Scenography? Or What's in a Name?', p. 14.
[99] Anne Karin ten Bosch and others, 'Thinking Scenography Inventing a Building', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 18.3 (2013), 95–105 (p. 95).
[100] Bosch and others, p. 95.

audience'.[101] Therefore, the notion of l'ecriture scénique refers to dialogic relations between the writer or author (the designer/scenographer) and a reader (the spectator/participant). L'écriture scénique may also imply processes of thinking. For example, Bosch *et al*. describe design/scenography as 'both an art and a way of thinking'.[102] Bleeker also describes design/scenography practice as 'thinking as a material practice'.[103] Therefore, the discursive frame of l'écriture scénique conceives of designer/scenographers as communicators and design/scenography as thinking expressed through materiality. The emphasis here, suggests Pavis, is on 'theatre as material' in contrast to 'theatre as text'.[104] The material space of the mise-en-scéne gives rise to a discovered text or a spatial dramaturgy.

The shift towards theatre as material is evident in scholarly writing about design/scenography education. Isackes explains that, for most of his thirty-year career as a design/scenography educator, theatre as text was at the heart of the process of design/scenography. He says he starts each new class with the same question:

> "What is the very first step in designing scenery?" Almost without exception students will answer, "Read the play." Although the written text is often a useful starting point in the design process, it may seem like heresy to say that it is not necessarily the only or most productive one for students.[105]

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[101] Laura Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Strategies and Communication' (Tampere: DREX Project Centre for Practise as Research in Theatre, 2012) <http://t7.uta.fi/drex/DREX/11_TextsAndPublicationsEn_files/1_Grondahl.pdf>.
[102] Bosch and others, pp. 95–96.
[103] Maaike Bleeker, 'Thinking That Matters: Towards a Post-Anthropocentric Approach to Performance Design', in *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), pp. 125–38 (p. 126).
[104] Patrice Pavis, 'On Faithfulness: The Difficulties Experienced by the Text/Performance Couple', *Theatre Research International*, 33.02 (2008), 117–26 (p. 118).
[105] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 44.

Isackes argues that the design process is often taught as a series of sequential steps which emerge from the play text; 'read the play, do research, develop a concept, do sketches, and devise the floor plan'.[106] The process assumes that a play's meaning may be produced as a concept. However, Halvorsen-Smith suggests that 'the scenic design process has become frozen, steeped in tradition - tradition so pervasive that we have become blind to it'.[107] This approach to the design/scenography process has become a practice paradigm and Isackes suggests that this is because education has unquestioningly replicated designer/scenographer's own training.[108] Gröndahl notes a similar phenomenon in Finland suggesting that the design/scenography process there has developed an 'ahistorical' quality because knowledge of the design process has typically been 'transmitted through oral interaction' rather than formally recorded. In this way, scenography has become thought of as a 'fixed discipline', standing outside of time, social and material conditions.[109]

Isackes proposes an alternative approach suggesting that the linear process be replaced with a 'framework for decision-making' that recognises that the process is 'messy, resistant to codification, and follows the serendipity of creative thought'.[110] He argues that this approach changes the relationship between teacher and learner so that the teacher becomes a guide, rather than a critic. In a similar way, Łarionow proposes a problem-based approach drawn from the tradition of cultural

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[106] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 41.
[107] Raynette Halvorsen-Smith, 'Deconstructing the Design Process: Teaching Scene Design Process through Feminist Performance Art', in *Perspectives on Teaching Theatre*, ed. by Raynette Halvorsen-Smith, Bruce A. McConachie, and Rhonda Blair. (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 107–15 (p. 107).
[108] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 41.
[109] Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', p. 87.
[110] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', pp. 42–43.

anthropology that provides a frame for examining 'the contexts of phenomena against the broad background of artistic and social activity'.[111] Gröndahl warns that design/scenography education has failed to keep up with the next generation of designer/scenographers, who have already rejected a linear process, turning instead to 'process-based devising methods' to produce design/scenography.[112] In a similar way, Isackes calls for a new emphasis on 'how work is made', so that designer/scenographers develop the capability to be 'generative' rather than 'reactive' artists.[113] He suggests that this represents a 'new paradigm' that changes the emphasis in education 'from the object(s) of design, to the process(es) of design'.[114] In these examples from the United States and Finland, an ahistorical tradition in design/scenography education exists that places text at the centre of a linear process.

2.7.2 Design/Scenography as Spatial Dramaturgy

Design/scenography has been associated with dramaturgy. For example, Lehmann uses the expression 'visual dramaturgy', Di Benedetto describes 'scenography as dramaturgical structure'[115] and Bergner uses the expression 'dramaturges of space' to describe the work of designer/scenographers.[116] Bosch suggests that 'scenography parallels dramaturgy' because both are concerned with

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[111] Łarionow, p. 122.
[112] Laura Gröndahl, Laura Gröndahl, 'Redefining Scenographic Strategies', *Performance: Visual Aspects of Performance Practice,* (Salzburg, Austria, 13-15 November 2012) (Salzberg, Visual Aspects of Performance Practice, 3rd Annual Global Conference, 2012).
[113] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', p. 99.
[114] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 41.
[115] Stephen Di Benedetto, 'Embodying Scenography', *Performance Research*, 18.3 (2013), 190–190 (p. 190).
[116] Bruce A. Bergner, *The Poetics of Stage Space* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2013), p. 148.

'sensorial composition, with temporal structures organized [sic] in space'.[117] Space is described by McKinney and Palmer as a defining feature of live performance[118] but, as D'arcy observes, it has typically provided the practical starting point, in the form of a ground plan, for a designer/scenographer's first encounter with the design process.[119]

The design/scenography literature is preoccupied with space. For example, Gröndahl distinguishes between physical, mental and social space, suggesting that a 'traditional designer' is principally concerned with physical space, whereas the contemporary designer/scenographer attempts to address the mental and social aspects of space, out of which a physical space might emerge.[120] There are attempts to define space too. For example, McKinney and Butterworth build on Gay McAuly's 'Taxonomy of Space',[121] describing architectural (place for performance), presentational (use of stage space), fictional (the imaginatively conceived space)[122] and gestural space.[123] They also highlight Lefebvre's notions of 'perceived' (discursively shaped space), 'conceived' (symbolically understood space) and 'lived' space (space as directly and subjectively experienced by individuals).[124] Similarly, Brejzek *et al*. describe 'narrative, mediated and transformative' spaces in performance.[125] Finally, Suhanovs makes the distinction

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[117] Bosch and others, p. 95.
[118] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 109.
[119] D'arcy, p. 76.
[120] Gröndahl, 'Redefining Scenographic Strategies'.
[121] Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Meaning Making in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 24–25.
[122] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 104.
[123] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 123.
[124] McKinney and Butterworth, p. 190.
[125] Thea Brejzek, 'Introduction', in *Monitoring Scenography 01: Space and Power*, ed. by Thea Brejzek, Wolfgang Greisenegge, and Lawrence Wallen (Zurich: Zurich University of the Arts, 2007), pp. 5–6 (p. 5).

between ‘designated space’ (the location for action) and ‘processual space’; ‘the dynamics of space and event’.[126]

Aronson proposes that the history of design/scenography can be described as ‘a pendulum swinging between space and image’. The swing to space, he suggests, emerged with the modernist designer/scenographers such as Adolphe Appia who sought to ‘redeem the stage as a three-dimensional volumetric space’ by rejecting naturalism, and Edward Gordon Craig who replaced ‘the static pictorial scene with movement in three-dimensional space’.[127] Brejzek argues that this modernist preoccupation with space signified an understanding of ‘space as social practice’.[128] Similarly, Gröndahl defines space as a social phenomenon.[129]

There is also the question of virtual space in design/scenography that raises the question of the distinctions between material and non-material dimensions of design/scenography. For example, Brejzek and Wallen propose that digital technologies are replacing solid and bounded space, with ‘openness, permeability and liquidity’[130] and McKinney draws attention to invisible spaces; the ‘spaces we know exist but can’t see’.[131] Finally, Aronson discusses the increased use of projected imagery and scenic elements in performance.[132]

The concept of invisible design/scenography does not necessarily imply an

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[126] Reinis Suhanovs, ‘Andris Freibergs: Teaching Scenography as a Language to Communicate with the World’, *Theatre and Performance Design*, 2.1–2 (2016), 154–60 (p. 155).
[127] Arnold Aronson, ‘The Future of Scenography’, *Theatre Design and Technology*, 6.1 (2010), 84–88 (p. 84).
[128] Brejzek, ‘The Scenographic (Re-)Turn: Figures of Surface, Space and Spectator in Theatre and Architecture Theory 1680-1980’, p. 18.
[129] Gröndahl, ‘Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design’, p. 13.
[130] Thea Brejzek and Lawrence Wallen, ‘Space And Hybrid Space’, *Scenography International*, 2004, 1–4 (p. 2).
[131] Joslin McKinney, ‘Projection and Transaction’, *Performance Research*, 10.4 (2005), 128–37 (p. 130).
[132] Aronson, ‘The Future of Scenography’, p. 87.

absence but appears to denote experiential dimensions of design/scenography and 'what is experienced by an individual audience member's whole body'.[133] The designer Elina Lifländer describes 'invisible scenography' as space *between* bodies, rather than material dimensions of design/scenography.[134] Therefore, the concept of 'invisible scenography' emphasises intangible, virtual, immaterial and experiential aspects of design/scenography. This highlights the overlapping concepts between the discursive frame of *design/scenography as spatial dramaturgy* and another discursive frame that I will address, of *design/scenography as mode of encounter.* Before I move on to this discursive frame, I will first briefly examine how spatial dramaturgy is discussed in design/scenography education literature.

Isackes distinguishes between 'visual value' and 'use value' or the distinction between 'visual attractiveness' and 'performative effect'.[135] Similarly Gröndahl argues that teaching should emphasise how space and vision have both communicative and performative functions.[136] The approach Isackes proposes is similar to the that described by Suhanovs, who documents Frieburg's approach to design/scenography education in Latvia. Frieburgs was awarded the 'Scenography Mentor Award' at the PQ in 2015. Frieburgs' students are given 'spatial assignments' that are similar to scene studies practiced by actors and directors. The aim of the spatial assignments is to develop learners' ability to organise space by 'attributing artistically figurative characteristics to it; to create a space - not a stage

[133] Lotker and Gough, p. 5.
[134] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 9.
[135] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 87.
[136] Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', p. 87.

decoration'.[137] In general, there is an absence of scholarly writing that describes how spatial dramaturgy may be both taught and learned. However, within my explanation of the next discursive frame of *scenography as a mode of encounter,* I summarise themes that emerge from design/scenography education literature concerning the use of the model box or maquette in design/scenography education. The phenomenon of the assessed model box has caused scholars to consider the relationship between the model box, space and experiential dimensions of performance.

2.7.3 Design/Scenography as Mode of Encounter

Gröndahl proposes that design/scenography has moved away from material notions of place to experiential understandings of place suggesting that 'the ontology of a work of art is found in structures of experience, rather than […] artefacts'.[138] Similarly, McKinney and Palmer identify common practices that they believe are shared by different design/scenography traditions, describing 'relationality' or the way that design/scenography 'facilitates spaces of encounter'; 'affectivity' concerned with the operation of the aesthetic at the level of the individual, and 'materiality' or 'the properties and capacities of things, places, bodies'.[139] Similarly, Shearing refers to the emergence of 'environmental scenography' where space surrounds and 'envelops' the participants, who then become part of the scenography.[140] This perhaps represents a concern with the

[137] Suhanovs, p. 155.
[138] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 10.
[139] McKinney and Palmer, p. 8.
[140] David Shearing, 'Scenographic Landscapes', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 34.1 (2014), 38–52 (p. 39).

'visceral experience' of spaces.[141] Di Benedetto goes further to suggest that design/scenography should 'take up the challenge of neurobiology' to better understand the biological and neurological dimensions of space.[142]

The conceptualisation of design/scenography as mode of encounter is associated with the incorporation of the participant/spectator, rather than the creation of material objects, per se.[143] Lavender identifies three terms to describe the shift towards the haptic and experiential in performance:

> [W]e observe a shift in performance-making from mise en scène (the arrangement of the stage) to mise en événement (the arrangement of the event) to mise en sensibilité (the arrangement of feeling).[144]

It is, according to Shearing, the incorporation of the spectator/participant that produces the notion of mise en sensibilité:

> This relationship between participant and design extends beyond the reading and inscription of the performance and materializes as a form of incorporation. Incorporation, I propose, is the synthesis of imaginative inscription and an active physical doing or working with scenography.[145]

Therefore, the two frames of *design/scenography as spatial dramaturgy* and *design/scenography as mode of encounter* overlap. Spatial dramaturgy, in the context of incorporation of the spectator into designed space and their engagement with it, appears to be enmeshed with the concept of mise en sensibilité, as Lavender observes:

> Theatre has become something other than an encounter between

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[141] Curtain and Roesner, p. 190.
[142] Di Benedetto, p. 190.
[143] Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', p. 97.
[144] Lavender, p. 5.
[145] Shearing, p. 47.

> actors, or between actor and audience. There is no longer a separation between the space of performance and that of spectatorship. Scenic space is inhabited.[146]

There is an absence of scholarly writing about how this discursive frame may be taught and/or learned. However, given the relationship between this discursive frame and *design/scenography as spatial dramaturgy*, a recurring motif in the design/scenography literature concerns the model box and this illuminates some of the debates about how the participant/spectator is positioned in performance.

Gröndahl observes that a model 'can only be looked at from a distance since you quite simply cannot push your head inside of it'.[147] The scale model positions the spectator as separate and distinct from performance, reproducing established relations between spectator and scenography where design/scenography is to be looked at, rather than engaged with (or created), by participant/spectators. Gröndahl proposes that the model box reproduces another relation, between designer/scenographers and actors because actors are treated 'like small figurines in the miniature model'. Instead, she argues, the designer/scenographer should experience the space with their 'own sensing and moving body'.[148] Furthermore, the model box, argues Isackes, reproduces hierarchical relations because it positions the designer/scenographer as reactive to a play text rather than 'generative'.[149]

Parker critiques the assessment of the model box, noting the lack of performative potential because it is separated from performance:

> What we have returned to is the relegation of design to a part of the whole in that it can be judged only in a dynamic context not, for

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[146] Lavender, p. 9.
[147] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 15.
[148] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 12.
[149] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', p. 99.

> example, as the plywood model might be by the external examiner of the theatre design course.[150]

The literature highlights the need for the design/scenography curriculum to pay attention to the effect of design/scenography on the audience. For example, Smalley argues learners should be encouraged to consider the impact of 'unity, contrast and topology' of space on audience members.[151] He observes that first year undergraduate students often perceive the role of technical dimensions of performance as 'lending a production some professional polish' in contrast to final year students who have a more self-reflexive attitude towards their practice. However, he notes that even final year students are often disengaged from the notion that their practices might have an impact on spectators.[152] Aside from these observations, critical examination of curricula and pedagogies relating to scenography as a mode of encounter, and how it may be taught and learned, is absent from scholarly literature.

2.7.4 Design/Scenography as Vagrancy

Anderson uses the notion of vagrancy to describe the designer/scenographer's attitude towards site-specific performance:

> [T]o declare that to be vagrant is to be opportunistic in the occupation of space; it is temporal and without authority […] To produce space I decided was to occupy: to occupy space as I ventured further in my thinking was to give rise to the space of vagrancy.[153]

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[150] Parker, p. 111.
[151] Smalley, p. 1.
[152] Smalley, p. 2.
[153] Benedict Anderson, p. 110.

The concept of vagrancy illustrates the literal expansion of design/scenography 'beyond theatre itself' into found and site-specific spaces.[154] For example, Brejzek *et al*. suggest that scenographic space 'reaches far beyond the black box of the proscenium stage' to embrace a variety of different spaces for performance.[155] Similarly, Collins and Nisbet refer to 'found space, site-specific space and virtual space'[156] and Herbert, in a special report on the Prague Quadrennial in 2011, observes that design/scenography moves beyond 'the classic text-based canon' to 'found spaces, factories, galleries, and streets'.[157] Furthermore, the rejection of theatre architecture, argues Baugh, is influenced by the emergence of mobile, flexible performance technologies that do not rely upon theatre architecture.[158] Aronson and Collins capture the spirit of these changes, saying that: 'Performance leapt off the stage and then burst out of the building'.[159]

The expansion of design/scenography beyond theatre architecture, may also be reshaping the role and purpose of design/scenography. For example, Maan proposes that theatre architecture has contributed to a tendency to measure design/scenography by whether or not it has successfully created *actual* locations. By moving into site-specific spaces, she argues that design/scenography has been 'liberated from that burden of geographical or historical referencing'.[160] The expansion of design/scenography to found spaces, virtual spaces and site-specific locations may be understood as the culmination of the attempt to integrate scenic

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[154] Lavender, p. 6.
[155] Brejzek, 'Introduction', p. 5.
[156] Collins and Nisbet, p. 1.
[157] Ian Herbert, 'Quadrennial in Prague', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 28.03 (2012), 297–98 (p. 297).
[158] Baugh, '"Devices of Wonder": Globalizing Technologies in the Process of Scenography', p. 33.
[159] Arnold Aronson and Jane Collins, 'Editors' Overview', *Theatre and Performance Design*, 2.1–2 (2016), 3–4 (p. 3).
[160] Bosch and others, p. 102.

space and place.

In more recently published scholarly literature, design/scenography engages with notions of selfhood, politics and identity. Příhodová, McKinney and Lotker reflecting on PQ 2015 suggest that 'scenography is no longer confined to theatre stages' but can 'engage with political realities and provide a means of exploring individual and social identities'.[161] They contrast previous PQ practices concerned with 'seeing scenography' with contemporary notions of 'sharing space'.[162] There is a relationship between place, shared space and *design/scenography as a mode of encounter.*

Therefore, design/scenography is expanding into both real and virtual places beyond traditional theatre architecture, towards new conceptual territory that is concerned with social and shared spaces. This marks a transition from notions of design/scenography which are to be *looked at* to notions of design/scenography which are to be occupied, shared and experienced.

There is an absence of scholarly literature about teaching design/scenography in the context of found, virtual and site-specific performance. There are some references to the expansion of the role of the designer/scenographer into other roles within the performance making process. For example, Isackes suggests that the design/scenography curriculum could include instruction in 'acting, dance, and directing so they [students] know what it is to inhabit and utilize performance architecture'.[163] Similarly, McKinney argues that scenography should be taught to

[161] Příhodová, McKinney, and Lotker, p. 8.
[162] Příhodová, McKinney, and Lotker, p. 6.
[163] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 50.

all those engaging in performance making.[164] As I mentioned earlier in this review, design/scenography as an expansive discipline may be constrained by how it is positioned within the academy. For example, Gröndahl argues that the 'hegemonic comprehension of the subject' has oscillated between independent design and participation in a collective process.[165]

As design/scenography expands into new places, questions are raised about ways of working and the designer/scenographer's role in performance making, as Howard suggests:

> The moment it is decided to move a production out of the theatre building or where a decision has been made to re-evaluate how the theatre building is to be used - the collaborative structure has to change.[166]

Furthermore, Gröndahl suggests that discussions about the organisation of performance making may provide a new avenue from which to consider the phenomenon of design/scenography:

> I think that scenography as a special artistic activity has more to do with the practical division of labour within a particular theatre ensemble than with ontological questions about the essence of special artistic fields.[167]

Gröndahl's observation leads to the final discursive frame that emerges from the literature; *design/scenography as organising mechanism.*

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[164] McKinney, 'The Role of Theatre Design: Towards a Bibliographical and Practical Accommodation.', p. 10.
[165] Gröndahl, 'Stage Design at the Crossroads of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Scenography Education in Finland', p. 86.
[166] Pamela Howard, 'Directors and Designers: Is There a Different Direction?', in *The Potentials of Spaces: The Theory and Practice of Scenography and Performance*, ed. by Alison Oddey and Christine White (Bristol: Intellect, 2006), pp. 25–32 (p. 30).
[167] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 10.

2.7.5 Design/Scenography as Organising Mechanism

In the introduction to this thesis, I suggested that exploring tacit design/scenography practices in education, could reveal paradigms about design/scenography, as Gröndahl observes:

> We also adopt certain methods of doing the job. The better we succeed, the more invisible these methods become to us, as if they were a set of neutral tools to execute a given task in the best possible way […] There are always some ideologies, values, politics and desires behind simple acts.[168]

Howard, writing in 2001, suggests that there may be a hierarchy associated with what she calls 'traditional' processes of performance making in British theatre. She associates the architectural arrangement of theatres, and the working spaces therein, with hierarchies of performance making:

> Producers and management offices are usually on the upper floors of the building in good light with perspective views, while the theatre artisans are usually located in basement workshops along with the heating plant and boiler room and no natural light. The axis of staging goes through the centre of the building from the stage to the director, who in rehearsal sits behind a production desk in the centre of the auditorium, much as a monarch sat in the Royal Box in earlier days.[169]

Theatre architecture mirrors hierarchies in performance making.

Gröndahl describes a 'traditional process' of design/scenography:

> [A]t first the scenographer reads the play and "writes" her interpretation of it in visual and spatial form; then the director reads the scenery and rewrites it by staging the performance there. Finally comes the spectator and reads the scenography as one integral part of the performance experience. The scenography is a visual text, generated through the reading of a verbal text.[170]

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[168] Gröndahl, 'Redefining Scenographic Strategies', p. 4.
[169] Pamela Howard, 'Directors and Designers: Is There a Different Direction?', p. 28.
[170] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Strategies and Communication', p. 5.

In this description, the design emerges from the text and is mediated through the director. Isackes suggests that this process establishes 'authorial' or 'textual hierarchy'[171] where 'the designer's contribution is reactive to a primary vocative text - a text strained through the conceptual lens of a director'.[172]

Fischer-Lichte explains that in the nineteenth century the dramatic text was of 'primary importance' with 'absolute priority' over other aspects of production. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the notion that performance might be primary was gaining currency.[173] However, McKinney and Butterworth observe that plays are not published until they are produced, and often reflect aspects of the design/scenography employed during the production. They suggest that the literary orientation in theatre history has 'often denigrated the visual aspect of theatre', with visual effects perceived to be 'redolent of extravagance and waste'. Furthermore, they suggest that although text is privileged, the playwright is not because 'production methods typically separate the work of the playwright from the actual production of the play text'.[174] In a similar way, Fischer-Lichte critiques the distinction between text and performance because, in practice, directors do not faithfully adhere to the text.[175] Similarly, Holland argues that 'the director as creator of the performance-text' has effectively replaced 'the writer as creator of the play-text'.[176]

As discussed earlier in this review, Aronson proposes that modern

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[171] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 45.
[172] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', p. 100.
[173] Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Reversing the Hierarchy between Text and Performance', *European Review*, 9.3 (2001), 277–91 (p. 278).
[174] McKinney and Butterworth, pp. 83–87.
[175] Fischer-Lichte, p. 278.
[176] Peter Holland, 'The Director and the Playwright: Control over the Means of Production', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 3.11 (1987), 207–17 (p. 215).

design/scenography became associated with the style of an individual designer, and this elevated the designer/scenographer 'to a position of equality, if not dominance' in performance making.[177] For example, Craig said about designers of the modern age that 'Today they impersonate and interpret […] tomorrow they represent and interpret and on the third day, they must create'.[178] Similarly, Antonin Artaud alluded to the potential for the 'mise en scéne' to dissolve the duality between author and director and to replace this with a 'unique creator'.[179] Singleton describes the modern phenomenon of 'a new kind of author, over and above the playwright' who 'saw and spoke on behalf of other creators'; a 'metteur en scène'.[180]

By the 1970s the 'director's theatre' in Britain had reached its height, with performers being the first to 'wrestle back control from the 'authoritarian' practices of some directors.[181] A more nuanced view is provided by Pavis, who suggests that modern 'directators' were briefly superseded by playwright directors in the 1960s and 1970s, who then ceded control to the director in the 1990s.[182] In this arrangement, designer/scenographers are in a subservient position to the director, a position Howard describes as being 'like a wife'. Howard reflects on the unequal relationship between director and designer/scenographer arguing that the accepted position of the designer/scenographer was not just to 'serve the play', but also to be

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[177] Arnold Aronson, 'Postmodern Design', *Theatre Journal*, 43.1 (1991), 1–13 (p. 2).
[178] Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre*, 5th edn (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1911), p. 61.
[179] Antonin Artaud, 'The Theatre of Cruelty, First and Second Manifestos', in *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, ed. by Eric Bentley (Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 55–75 (p. 59).
[180] Brian Singleton, 'Mise En Scene', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 23.1 (2013), 48–49 (p. 48).
[181] Christine A White, 'Methodological Practices for Directing and Designing', in *Directors and Designers*, ed. by Christine A White (Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd, 2009), pp. 135–48 (p. 145).
[182] Pavis, p. 123.

'the servant of the director'.[183] Similarly, Sharifi argues that design/scenography has been subservient to *both* the director and the performing body.[184]

Discussions about performance organisation and design/scenography often return to questions of authorship. For example, White suggests that authorship can be identified through a production 'signature'. Describing the case of 'Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*' she suggests that it was the design/scenography of this production which led to Brook claiming the production signature. The designer/scenographer, Sally Crabb, 'is rarely mentioned in relation to this production'.[185] Spencer suggests that this authorial relation is changing because the scenographic turn expands the role of the visual in performance 'to embrace notions of authorship'.[186]

The devolution of authorship to the designer/scenographer, Hickie proposes, repositions the designer/scenographer in performance organisation. For example, through their involvement in rehearsals.[187] But, as Gröndahl suggests, designers are usually prevented from contributing to rehearsals because design/scenography is associated with physical structures that are planned in advance. This is predicated on a notion of 'stage representation as a process rather than a static 'work'.[188] As Howard explains, recollecting experiences from the start of her career, 'The final product was probably valued but not the process I don't think, in fact not I don't

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[183] Pamela Howard, 'Directors and Designers: Is There a Different Direction?', pp. 26–27.
[184] Parjad Sharifi, 'Bioscenography: Towards the Scenography of Non- Representation', in *Activating the Inanimate: Visual Vocabularies of Performance Practice*, ed. by Celia Morgan and Filipa Malva (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2013), pp. 75–84 (p. 77).
[185] White, p. 46.
[186] Spencer.
[187] Rebecca Hickie, 'Scenography as Process in British Devised and Postdramatic Theatre' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Loughborough University, 2009), p. 133.
[188] Scorzin, p. 261.

think, I know'.[189] By conceptualising design/scenography as 'event, experience and action',[190] designer/scenographers have more opportunities to engage with 'bodily exercises and experiments',[191] and thereby participate in performance making processes.

Gröndahl suggests that processual and collaborative approaches to design/scenography reflect a general attitude of cooperation in society where team working is valued, with individual skill displaced by networks. In performance, she observes the emergence of production roles that are not fixed but are 'redefined according to the needs and aims of each particular production'.[192] Similarly, Koo proposes that one consequence of collective and devised processes is that the borders between roles are blurred. She says, 'I do not believe only one person on a production can call themselves a "scenographer"'.[193] Collectively produced performance/design/scenography appears to be radical and liberating for designer/scenographers; an *authorial turn* in occupational identity.

There is a lack of scholarly literature about whether and how issues of performance making organisation are addressed in the design/scenography curriculum. Gröndahl identifies the need for it to be addressed, arguing that hierarchy could be supplanted with a 'dialogic negotiation with a two-way interaction' to facilitate new working methods in design/scenography.[194] Similarly, Isackes suggests that the 'how of practice' will shape the invention of product. He

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[189] Pamela Howard, *Interviewed by Kate Harris,* 9th November 2005.
[190] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Strategies and Communication', p. 2.
[191] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Strategies and Communication', p. 10.
[192] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 11.
[193] Camellia Koo, 'Improvising In and Out of the Box (or, Caution: Do Not Enter If You Are Claustrophobic)', *Canadian Theatre Review*, 143.1 (2010), 55–59 (p. 59).
[194] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Strategies and Communication', p. 12.

suggests that work that is created within 'rigid, parochial structures' will not be able to respond to 'the creative challenges of a diverse and expansive disciplinary scene'.[195]

Another factor shaping the conceptualisation of performance organisation is the place of the discipline in the academy. For example, Isackes argues that student designer/scenographers often adopt two roles at the same time, as designer/scenographer and director. The problem with this approach, he suggests, is that it represents 'a rehearsal of a process that is not accountable to collaboration, which is an essential activity of theatre making'.[196] Instead, he proposes that the design/scenography curriculum should be designed around devised group performance projects.

There appear to be tensions in the design/scenography literature between an inclination to separateness, of design/scenography and designer/scenographer, and collaboration. Irwin explores this tension, contrasting notions of the individual designer/scenographer, with a concept she calls 'agential realism', a networked concept of 'intra-active agency'.[197] Therefore, discussion of what design/scenography is, necessitates the discussion of how design/scenography and performance are organised and produced.

Through the review of design/scenography literature, I have shown that there are overlapping and related conceptualisations of design/scenography. Through the tactic of the discursive frame, I aimed to show two things; the proliferation of terms,

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[195] Isackes, 'A Change of Scene', p. 99.
[196] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 50.
[197] Kathleen Irwin, 'Scenographic Agency: A Showing-Doing and a Responsibility for Showing-Doing', in *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*, ed. by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), pp. 111–24 (p. 112).

and the relationships between them. However, it is clear that discussions of design/scenography education in the UK is very limited but there are related fields that may be drawn upon to identify related pedagogies in design/scenography education.

3. Models of Learning and Signature Pedagogy

In the next part of the review, I explain the concept of 'signature pedagogies' by identifying pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education and by describing the constructivist philosophies that they emerge from.

3.1 Constructivist and Technicist Theories of Learning

Constructivism is defined by Wiggins as both a 'philosophical perspective' and a 'theory of learning', [198] whilst Merriam describes it as 'how people make sense of their experience'.[199] In education, constructivist philosophy defines knowledge as the nature of human understanding. Social constructivism emphasises that learning cannot be separated from the interaction of the individual with social dimensions.[200] For example, Rasmussen defines constructivism in the context of drama education:

> [I]nstead of discovering or imitating truth or pre-given knowledge, the mind and the self emerge through locally situated and behavioural processes. The constructivist artist or teacher believes that the self, meaning and knowledge is developed under the influence of all

[198] Jackie Wiggins, 'Constructivism, Policy, and Arts Education', *Arts Education Policy Review*, 116.3 (2015), 115–17 (p. 115).
[199] Sharan B Merriam and Rosemary F Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1999), p. 260.
[200] Roya Amineh and Asl Hanieh, 'Review of Constructivism and Social Constructivism', *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, 1.1 (2015), 9–16 (p. 13).

> present and 'interacting' language, materials, environment, bodily acts, cognitive and affective representations.[201]

Pritchard identifies Jean Piaget as the key theorist of constructivism,[202] with Lev Vygotsky being most closely associated with social constructivism.[203] The early twentieth century progressive educationalist, John Dewey, is also associated with constructivism because he theorises the relationship between experience and learning.[204] Dewey identifies similarities between constructivist theories of learning and aesthetic experience and their relevance to discussions of creative and performing arts education. For example, in *Art as Experience,* he describes art as the embodiment of 'intensified forms of experience',[205] and therefore there appears to be an inimical relationship between the arts, and constructivist philosophy.

Constructivism impacts upon pedagogy in two dimensions. The first is how the purpose of education is conceptualised, and the second is how that might be manifested in approaches to teaching and learning. Freire comments that 'Experience cannot be exported, it can only be reinvented'.[206] This commentary underscores Freire's belief that learning is experiential and knowledge should not be treated as a product separate from the individuals that possess it. Similarly, Matusov *et al.* refer to what they describe as a 'technological'[207] mode of education where skills or knowledge are garnered in pursuit of pre-set curricular endpoints.

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[201] Bjorn Rasmussen, 'The "Good Enough" Drama: Reinterpreting Constructivist Aesthetics and Epistemology in Drama Education', *Research in Drama Education*, 15.4 (2010), 529–46 (p. 533).
[202] Alan Pritchard, *Ways of Learning: Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), p. 19.
[203] Pritchard, p. 25.
[204] Rasmussen, p. 533.
[205] Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1934), p. 3.
[206] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Solidarity* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 17.
[207] Eugene Matusov and others, 'Dialogic Education for and from Authorial Agency', *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal*, 4.2016 (2016), 162–97 (p. 173).

They argue that the goals created through a technological approach are wholly separate from students' personal goals, values, and interests and are therefore 'incompatible and irreconcilable' with 'education for agency'.[208] Freire critiques this conceptual separation of knowledge from self and others, and the relations of teachers and learners, through his description of the 'Banking Method' of education.[209] Freire's notion conceptualises knowledge as a bank rather than an egalitarian power relationship between the teacher and learner. Instead, he argues that exchanges between teachers and learners should involve challenge because this creates the necessary conditions for learning.[210]

The purpose of technicist models of education is to move learners from 'ignorance' to 'knowledge', 'replacing mere opinion, mistaken thought, and blind faith with solid fact and logical reasoning'.[211] Technicism is associated with 'standardised curricula,' and the 'increasing accountability' of teachers and the process of learning.[212] Treating knowledge as fixed and separate from individuals, suggests Wiggins, leads to 'fixed curricula' that is 'product' and 'teacher-oriented', rather than 'contextual, negotiable and socioculturally mediated'.[213] This approach may have negative consequences for learners, and teachers, according to Gergen:

> Knowledge is essentially treated as "healthy food", educators are the dispensers of the nutrients, and students are defined as needy […] These experts "dispense the truth" that students will ultimately be "fed". Lower in the hierarchy are educational experts such as curriculum designers, who package the knowledge into educational

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[208] Matusov and others, p. 162.
[209] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), p. 108.
[210] Freire, *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, pp. 30–32.
[211] Kenneth J Gergen, *An Invitation to Social Construction*, 3rd edn (London: Sage Publications Inc., 2015), p. 192.
[212] Trevor Thwaites, 'Education as Spectacle', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 47.9 (2015), 904–17 (p. 906).
[213] Wiggins, p. 117.

> units. Following are administrators and bureaucrats who select among these units […] the teacher is also discarded by such an arrangement […] they lose their enthusiasm and are denied the opportunity to create educational experiences tailored to their particular situation. They are deskilled.

Gergen argues that education should be about 'taking action in matters about which one cares',[214] rather than arriving at pre-set curricular endpoints. Pritchard summarises a constructivist approach as:

- The construction of knowledge and not the reproduction of knowledge is paramount
- Learning can lead to multiple representations of reality
- Authentic tasks in a meaningful context are encouraged
- Reflection on prior experience is encouraged
- Collaborative work for learning is encouraged
- Autonomy in learning is encouraged.[215]

Sjøberg also provides a summary of features of constructivism, that reflect those identified by Pritchard, but further emphasise the social dimensions of constructivism.[216] Prentki and Stinson propose that the consequence of the monological approach associated with technicist models of education is to place student learning in direct opposition to, and delegitimised by, the context of a teacher's agenda that is shaped by standards defined by Government bodies.[217] Freire suggests that this 'collapse into technique' is indicative of an education 'for production', rather than for 'beauty, the question of being [and] ethics'.[218] In

[214] Kenneth J Gergen, pp. 194–95.
[215] Pritchard, pp. 35–36.
[216] Svein Sjøberg, 'Constructivism and Learning. The Many Faces of Constructivism', *International Encyclopaedia of Education*, 2007, 485–90 (p. 486).
[217] Tim Prentki and Madonna Stinson, 'Relational Pedagogy and the Drama Curriculum', *Research in Drama Education*, 21.1 (2016), 1–12 (p. 5).
[218] Freire, *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, p. 25.

practice these contradictions are navigated by what Matusov *et al.* call 'constructivist-technical' teachers who simultaneously adopt approaches to teaching that promote 'learning activism' in order to arrive at the predetermined outcomes of the curriculum.[219] Now that I have summarised constructivist and technicist theories of education, I will address the question of signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education, and how they relate to these theories.

3.2 Signature Pedagogy

The term 'signature pedagogy' was identified by Shulman to describe the 'personalities, dispositions and cultures' of particular academic fields.[220] Thompson *et al.* suggest that signature pedagogies are both epistemological and ontological because they address *what* individuals have to know, and know how to do, in a particular field. They are also concerned with *how* individuals make meaning of the world. Whilst signature pedagogies privilege some forms of knowing and being, they also neglect others. Shulman calls this 'compromised pedagogy',[221] a notion I return to in the conclusion to this thesis.

The signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education, that emerge from the arts education literature, are 'folk', 'embodied' 'relational' and 'place-based 'pedagogies. I will review each of these in turn.

[219] Matusov and others, p. 195.
[220] Shulman, pp. 52–53.
[221] Shulman, p. 58.

3.2.1 Folk Pedagogy

'Folk' pedagogy is a term devised by another constructivist education theorist, Jerome Bruner,[222] to describe intuitive and learned understandings of pedagogy. In this instance, a teacher's pedagogy is shaped by the ways that they were taught, a process that Shulman calls an 'apprenticeship of observation'.[223] Mock and Way describe this as a process of incorporation, 'of many others [pedagogy] into his/her own'.[224]

Folk pedagogy has an axiological dimension of tacit values that emerge from teacher's experiences of being taught, and from their experiences of professional practice. For example, Thomson *et al.* suggest that practitioner/educators have an axiological commitment to collaboration and cooperation that arises from professional practice.[225] Similarly, Evans argues that ontological aspects of identity, embedded in drama education, treat students as 'emergent professionals'.[226] This theme extends to art and design education too where pedagogies are concerned with 'the whole person and their identity within the subject', rather than just the epistemological aspects of the discipline.[227]

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[222] Jerome Bruner, 'Folk Pedagogy', in *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 44–65 (p. 46).
[223] Shulman, p. 57.
[224] Mock and Way, p. 201.
[225] Pat Thomson and others, *The Signature Pedagogies Report (Research Report)*, 2012 <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/publication/the-signature-pedagogies-project/> [accessed 13 December 2018].
[226] Mark Evans, *Making Theatre Work: Entrpreneurship and Professional Practice in Theatre Higher Education (Research Report)*, 2010 <http://www.palatine.ac.uk/files/makingtheatrework.pdf> [accessed 1 December 2018].
[227] Alison Shreeve, 'The Way We Were? Signature Pedagogies under Threat', in *Researching Design Education 1st International Symposium for Design Education Researchers CUMULUS Association//DRS SIG on Design Pedagogy Paris, France May 18–19, 2011*, ed. by Erik Bohemia, Brigitte Collina, and Borja de Mozota Luisa (Paris: Cumulus Association and the Design Research Society, 2011), p. 113.

3.2.2 Embodied Pedagogy

Embodied pedagogy is concerned with the notion of embodied cognition where both the body and the brain are both involved in cognition.[228] For example, in art and design, and drama education,[229] individuals learn concepts and skills through using 'tools' and applying physical techniques.[230] In this way, creative skills and techniques cannot be separated from the body of the person who possesses and uses them, and cannot be produced through 'formal' knowledge alone.[231] Embodied learning may also contribute towards the development of personal agency,[232] or, as Prentki and Stinson describe it, the 'revelation that students are able to make/do something rather than having something done to them'.[233] This contrasts with didactic education, that Nguyen and Larson claim 'regards the body as little more than a subordinate instrument in service to the mind'.[234]

Embodied pedagogy can take different forms. Budge provides the example of embodied pedagogy, where teachers physically deconstruct their own practices (use of tools and/or techniques) in order to demonstrate these to students. Teachers may also use their bodies to mirror students' own to show drawing techniques.[235]

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[228] Rick Kemp, 'The Embodied Performance Pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq', *Connection Science*, 29.1 (2017), 94–105 (p. 95).
[229] Mock and Way.
[230] Alison Shreeve, Ellen Sims, and Paul Trowler, '"A Kind of Exchange": Learning from Art and Design Teaching', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29.2 (2010), 125–38 (p. 135).
[231] Kylie Budge, 'Teaching Art and Design: Communicating Creative Practice through Embodied and Tacit Knowledge', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15.3–4 (2016), 432–45 (pp. 433–34).
[232] Wiggins, p. 115.
[233] Prentki and Stinson, p. 6.
[234] David J. Nguyen and Jay B. Larson, 'Don't Forget About the Body: Exploring the Curricular Possibilities of Embodied Pedagogy', *Innovative Higher Education*, 40.4 (2015), 331–44 (p. 331).
[235] Budge, pp. 440–41.

Whichever form embodied pedagogy takes, it emerges from inheritance, as Mock and Way propose; 'one needs to assimilate and embody the knowledges of the past'.[236]

In theatre and performance, the relation between the performing body and embodied pedagogy is apparent because performance events involve real performing bodies in real time. However, in art and design, educators have raised concerns about the impact of technology on embodied forms of knowledge. For example, Salzer is concerned that the fundamental relationship between the body and materials in 'theatre design' could be usurped by virtual technologies. He presages a paradigm shift in the aesthetics of design, suggesting that the move away from embodied knowledge calls into question what it means to be an artist.[237]

3.2.3 Relational Pedagogy

Relational pedagogy is defined by Prentki and Stinson as a pedagogy that 'opens possibilities for dialogue and shared imagining among students, teachers and community'.[238] They locate the origins of the term with Nicolas Bourriaud, who suggests that art should create active connections between the art work and those responding to it.[239] Hickman and Heaton also identify relational pedagogy as an important dimension of art and design education because learning requires 'progressive' and 'sensitive dialogue' between teacher and student, alongside 'continuous negotiated assessment'. They propose that this pedagogy mirrors the

[236] Mock and Way, p. 202.
[237] Beeb Salzer, 'Teaching Design in a World without Design', in *Teaching Theatre Today*, ed. by Anne L Fliotsos and Gail S Medford (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 147–57 (p. 153).
[238] Prentki and Stinson, p. 6.
[239] Prentki and Stinson, p. 3.

dialogic nature of art-making, whereby artists engage in dialogues with self and others during the making process.[240] Shreeve *et al*. have called this, 'a kind of exchange'.[241] Pedagogically, Gergen suggests, this moves away from a monological approach, that focuses upon the 'teacher's traits or actions' towards a dialogical approach, concerned with how the teacher relates with students.[242] Orr *et al.* describe this configuration of a teacher as a 'mid-wife' or someone who helps to bring the work into being,[243] noting the earlier comments made in this thesis regarding gendered 'support' roles. Whereas Gergen offers a different conceptualisation of the teacher's role, as 'facilitator', 'coach' and 'friend'.[244]

Vaughan *et al.* say that relational pedagogies are important because creative processes are associated with 'ambiguity'. Learners often do not know the outcome of creative practice,[245] but this experience is at odds with student expectations of clear instruction and predetermined outcomes in technicist models of learning.[246] Shreeve suggests that art and design teachers may also be in a position of uncertainty, 'engaging with unknown outcomes alongside the student'.[247] This form of constructivist approach presupposes that teacher and student are engaged in a *mutual* process of discovery, as Freire suggests:

> The fact that the teacher supposedly knows and the student supposedly

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[240] Richard Hickman and Rebecca Heaton, 'Visual Art', in *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment: Two Volume Set*, ed. by Dominic Wyse, Louise Hayward, and Jessica Pandya (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), pp. 343–57 (p. 347).
[241] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler.
[242] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 196.
[243] Susan Orr, Mantz Yorke, and Bernadette Blair, 'The Answer Is Brought about from within You: A Student-Centred Perspective on Pedagogy in Art and Design', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 33.1 (2014), 32–45 (p. 39).
[244] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 197.
[245] Suzi Vaughan and others, 'Mind the Gap : Expectations, Ambiguity and Pedagogy within Art and Design Higher Education.', in *The Student Experience in Art and Design Higher Education: Drivers for Change.* (Cambridge: Jill Rogers Associates Limited, 2008), pp. 125–48 (p. 125).
[246] Matusov and others, p. 173.
[247] Shreeve, p. 115.

> does not know, does not prevent the teacher from learning during the process of teaching, and the student from teaching, in the process of learning. The beauty of the process is exactly this possibility of re-learning, of exchanging. This is the essence of democratic education.[248]

An aspect of relational pedagogy highlighted in creative and performing arts education literature is the 'critique', referred to in art and design education as the 'crit'. In performing arts education, Kornetsky describes the critique as a 'dialogic' process that involves 'questioning, listening, and providing clear reasons for acting choices'.[249] Similarly, Shreeve suggests that the 'crit' is most effective when students are in dialogue with one another, and in small group discussion.[250] This process of critique may also involve professionals from outside the institution.[251] However, relational pedagogy may be challenging for students and teachers because, as Gergen suggests, individuals must learn how to deal with disagreements and different opinions. But, as he points out, these skills are essential for learning how to live in 'a world of conflicting realities'.[252]

In practice, relational pedagogies can be confounded by technicist models of education because testing reconfigures the relation between teachers and students:

> When teachers test students, they generate a distance between them. What might have appeared to be a friendly, collaborative relationship is replaced with one in which the teacher becomes the student's judge.[253]

Hickman and Heaton raise concerns that assessment hinders creativity,[254]

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[248] Freire, *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, pp. 19–20.
[249] Lisa Kornetsky, 'Signature Pedagogy in Theatre Arts', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 16.3 (2017), 241–51 (p. 241).
[250] Shreeve, p. 118.
[251] Kornetsky, p. 246.
[252] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 202.
[253] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 212.
[254] Hickman and Heaton, p. 346.

whilst Askland *et al.* suggest that assessment inhibits risk-taking and originality, because students are strategic in assessing what the personal preferences are of their teachers and then recreating that aesthetic style in order to secure higher grades.[255] It is understandable why students might adopt these strategies because, as O'Gorman and Werry observe, 'failure hurts'. However, Kornetsky identifies failure as an important dimension of creative practice.[256] O'Gorman and Werry bring an interesting perspective to the question of failure, identifying it as 'the bed-partner of that neo-liberal fetish 'innovation' and a necessity in a world without guarantees'.[257] They suggest failure has the potential for resistance, because failing unravels 'the certainties of knowledge, competence, representation, normativity and authority' asserted through technicist approaches to education.[258] Hickman and Heaton offer some practical strategies for navigating these difficulties proposing that educators should build in multiple points of formative assessment to enable learners to experience, and learn from, failure.[259] Another proposal is suggested by Gergen, who argues that assessment outcomes should be co-constructed with individual learners.[260]

3.2.4 Place-Based Pedagogy

The final signature pedagogy associated with the creative and performing arts is place-based pedagogy. This term describes the impact of place on learning.

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[255] Hedda Haugen Askland, Anthony Williams, and Michael Ostwald, 'Teaching Creative Design : A Challenging Field', in *Creativity and Innovation in Design: Procedings of the Second Conference, (DESIRE '11)* (Eindhoven: University of Technology, Eindhoven, 2011), pp. 149–56 (p. 151).
[256] Kornetsky, p. 245.
[257] Róisn O'Gorman and Margaret Werry, 'On Failure (On Pedagogy)', *Performance Research*, 17.1 (2012), 1–8 (p. 1).
[258] O'Gorman and Werry, p. 1.
[259] Hickman and Heaton, p. 345.
[260] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 210.

Gruenewald proposes that place is synonymous with learning:

> [P]laces teach us about how the world works and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy. Further, places make us: As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and our possibilities are shaped.[261]

Gruenewald identifies four dimensions of place; perceptual, sociological, political and ecological.[262] Wieszaczewska proposes that this interest in place-based pedagogy has arisen due to the growth of 'non-places' that humans occupy.[263] Whereas Ellsworth draws particular attention to *where* learning takes place. This aspect is concerned with the somatic and corporeal aspects of learning spaces experienced by bodies.[264] She argues that the only time that bodies are considered in educational institutions and practices is when they are at the service of predetermined cognitive goals.[265] I now consider two types of learning place; the studio and work-based or placement learning.

Shreeve suggests the studio in art and design education is a 'location, a home base, a familiar territory'.[266] Micklethwaite defines the studio as a place that fosters 'experiential learning', because of the social nature of teacher/student interactions.[267] The studio represents:

> [A] shared, prolonged, communal activity in which the process of making is visible and a focus for comment and debate by all who

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[261] David A. Gruenewald, 'Foundations of Place: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Place-Conscious Education', *American Educational Research Journal*, 40.3 (2007), 619–54 (p. 621).
[262] Gruenewald.
[263] Agnieszka Wieszaczewska, 'The Actor-Network Theory in the Context of Place-Based Pedagogy', *Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 2.2 (2018), 167–78 (p. 168).
[264] Elizabeth Ellsworth, *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 4.
[265] Ellsworth, p. 24.
[266] Shreeve, p. 116.
[267] Paul Micklethwaite, 'Discussing Art and Design Education: Themes from Interviews with UK Design Stakeholders', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 24.1 (2005), 84–92 (pp. 87–88).

wander through, tutors and students alike.[268]

However, the continuation of the studio as 'home base' is under pressure. Askland refers to the increased tendency of institutions to timetable studio time, with students' access to the studio being limited to the official timetable.[269] Shreeve suggests that the increasing use of technology in art and design lessens the need for students to learn embodied practices, reducing the requirement for studio spaces.[270] Smith-Taylor notes the paradoxical phenomenon that access to studio spaces are under pressure at a time when there is pedagogic interest in transferring the social-constructivist benefits of the studio to other subject areas in the academy.[271]

The second dimension of place-based pedagogies is in the area of work-based and place learning. Shreeve proposes that the understanding of practice beyond the institution is key to signature pedagogies in art and design.[272] However, Allen *et al.* highlight the ways that placement learning in the arts reproduces social inequality because placements are often unpaid, and students are reliant upon pre-existing familial and class networks to secure 'good' placements.[273] Securing a placement is discursively framed by institutions and employers as being indicative of student 'resourcefulness' and 'motivation' but this ignores pre-existing privilege that facilitates entry to placements. Their criticism highlights the absence of engagement by HEI's in providing dedicated and structured provision of, and

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[268] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler, p. 134.
[269] Askland, Williams, and Ostwald, p. 155.
[270] Shreeve, p. 122.
[271] Summer Smith-Taylor, 'Effects of Studio Space on Teaching and Learning: Preliminary Findings from Two Case Studies', *Innovative Higher Education*, 33.4 (2009), 217–28.
[272] Shreeve, p. 115.
[273] K. Allen and others, 'Becoming Employable Students and "Ideal" Creative Workers: Exclusion and Inequality in Higher Education Work Placements', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34.3 (2013), 431–52 (pp. 432–39).

support for, placements in creative subjects, that might prevent exploitation, and mitigate structural inequalities.[274]

3.2.5 Summary: Signature Pedagogies

I have identified four signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education. I do not claim that these represent an exhaustive list of pedagogies in the creative arts context, but they do indicate that there is an association between constructivist theories about learning and signature pedagogies associated with creative and performing arts education. Furthermore, the literature from these related fields suggests that technicist approaches to teaching and learning disrupt these signature pedagogies. I will examine this in more detail in the context of design/scenography education in chapter six, and in the conclusion in chapter seven. However, in the next part of this review I shall turn to the final topic in this review that is concerned with agency.

4. Definitions of Agency, Structure and Power

Agency has been described as a 'slippery',[275] 'elusive'[276] and 'abstract'[277] concept. Slippery because agency is often expressed in paradigmatic terms, 'as a placeholder for some vague sense of human freedom or individual volition within a broader model'.[278] Elusive, because the act of defining agency extracts it from the

[274] Allen and others, p. 437.
[275] Hitlin and Elder, p. 171.
[276] Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, 'What Is Agency?', *American Journal of Sociology*, 103.4 (1998), 962–1023 (p. 962).
[277] Anneli Eteläpelto and others, 'What Is Agency? Conceptualizing Professional Agency at Work', *Educational Research Review*, 10 (2013), 45–65 (p. 47).
[278] Hitlin and Elder, p. 171.

flow of time and relations with social structure.[279] Abstract because it involves 'various assumptions of reality'.[280] The agency literature highlights how these assumptions of reality shape the ways in which agents and structures have been placed in a duality of agency versus structure. However, Giddens offers a counter view to this, suggesting that agency and structure should be thought of as a dualism or structuration process, whereby human actions simultaneously structure and are structured by society.[281] Therefore, agency is conceptualised as being either/or/and separable, inseparable, subservient, dominant or interdependent with social structure.

As a property of individuals, agency has been described as being 'a faculty of free-will and choice'[282] or 'existential agency'.[283] Existential agency distinguishes the capacity to act from an individual's *perception* of the capacity to act. An individual's perception of the capacity to act is related to notions of self-efficacy and control. Self-efficacy has been described as being at the heart of agency because it is concerned with 'the personal agency of causality'.[284] Bandura suggests that belief in one's own self-efficacy may also shape how individuals experience either 'low or active agency' in influencing one's own life.[285] Similarly, Haggard and Chambon use the phrase 'a sense of agency' to describe the feelings of being 'able

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[279] Emirbayer and Mische, p. 963.
[280] Eteläpelto and others, p. 47.
[281] Giddens, p. 1.
[282] Paul Kockelman, 'The Relation between Meaning, Power and Knowledge', *Current Anthropology*, 48.3 (2007), 375–401 (p. 375).
[283] Eteläpelto and others, p. 58.
[284] Albert Bandura, 'Self-Efficacy Mechanism in Human Agency', *American Psychologist*, 37.2 (1982), 122–47 (p. 137).
[285] Albert Bandura, 'Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales', in *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*, ed. by Frank Pajares and Timothy C. Urdan (Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, 2006), pp. 307–37 (p. 309).

to control one's own actions and, through them, events in the outside world'.[286]

Broadfoot and Munshi suggest that agency is more often associated with the person who acts, with little recognition of the agency of the person who is acted upon.[287] However, both Scott[288] and Kockleman[289] argue that individuals assert agency by resisting the domination of another agent. In contrast, Giddens proposes that existential agency is not solely concerned with agents taking action but may have a causal effect by *refraining* from action. This is what Giddens calls 'counter-power'.[290] Therefore, agency can be seen to be related to power, both in the production of agents who have the power to act, and as subjects who are acted upon, and who become agents through either asserting resistance or refraining from action. As Hewson observes 'Power produces things - indeed it is the active producer of subjects. Agents are products of power. Power causes things to happen. Power acts'.[291]

In a dialogue on agency and power, Hayward and Lukes suggest that 'the twin concerns of power and structure and agency have developed in parallel rarely engaging one another'[292] and agency and power are conceptualised in the literature, in similar ways. As I have already suggested, there is a debate in the literature about how individuals enact agency within social structures. For example, Kockleman

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[286] Patrick Haggard and Valerian Chambon, 'Sense of Agency', *Current Biology*, 22.10 (2012), R390–92 (p. R391).
[287] Kirsten. J. Broadfoot and Debashish. Munshi, 'Agency as a Process of Translation', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 29.3 (2015), 469–74 (p. 469).
[288] John C Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
[289] Kockelman, p. 375.
[290] Giddens, p. 14.
[291] Martin Hewson, 'Agency', in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. by Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe. (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2010), p. 15.
[292] Clarissa Hayward and Steven Lukes, 'Nobody to Shoot? Power, Structure, and Agency: A Dialogue', *Journal of Power*, 1.1 (2008), 5–20 (p. 5).

argues that 'we make ourselves, but not under conditions of our own choosing'.[293] Similarly, Hayward and Lukes engage in a debate which is at the heart of much of the power literature, between a voluntaristic view of agency which reduces power to the conscious and intentional actions of agents and a determinist position which excludes human agency, rendering individuals powerless.[294] Pansardi suggests that a relational definition of 'power over' conceives of power as being a product of social causation. Whereas an ability-based definition of 'power to' refers to the ability of individuals to act.[295] These positions conceive of power as domination versus power as empowerment.[296] Similar to agency and structure, dualistic notions of power *over* and *to* obscure their interdependence. Lukes suggests that there is a 'third dimension' of power, where power works through, as well as on subjects, shaping individuals' perception of their self-efficacy:

> [P]ower consists, not in prevailing over the opposition of others, nor in imposing an agenda on them, but in influencing their desires, beliefs and judgments in ways that work against their interests.[297]

Because of this quality, he argues that structures are highly durable, making some forms of action 'highly improbable […] and others […] exceedingly likely'. Pansardi describes power as a relational concept, she calls this 'social power':

> [P]ower to and power over refer to the same social facts, they both consist in the changing of someone else's incentive structure and in the obtainment of a specific outcome, no matter whether they refer to something I can do by myself, having obtained the non-interference of others, or in the specific product of someone else's action. Accordingly, no distinction, and consequently, no priority, can be

[293] Kockelman, p. 376.
[294] Hayward and Lukes, p. 5.
[295] Pamela Pansardi, 'Power To and Power Over: Two Distinct Concepts of Power?', *Journal of Political Power*, 5.1 (2012), 73–89 (p. 73).
[296] Mark Haugaard, 'Rethinking the Four Dimensions of Power: Domination and Empowerment', *Journal of Political Power*, 5.1 (2012), 33–54 (p. 33).
[297] Hayward and Lukes, p. 6.

applied between power to and power over.[298]

Therefore social power is relational and social, working through, as well as on, individuals. Evans suggests that agency and structure are socially situated, simultaneously enabled and constrained by social structures which, in turn, shape an individual's perception of own agency; a phenomenon she refers to as 'bounded agency'.[299] These concepts of social power challenge the tacit assumption in the literature that agents act in isolation from one another. Bandura describes a complex network of social relations, called 'proxy agency':

> In personal agency exercised individually, people bring their influence to bear on what they can control directly. However, in many spheres of functioning, people do not have direct control over conditions that affect their lives. They exercise proxy agency. This requires influencing others who have the resources, knowledge, and means to act on their behalf to secure the outcomes they desire. People do not live their lives in social isolation.[300]

Proxy agency is a network-centric concept where social reality is seen as 'multiple participants negotiating as they interact with and co-operate or struggle with each other'.[301] described as 'social agency' by Meyer and Jepperson,[302] and as 'collective agency' by Hewson.[303] An individual's perception of the capacity to act, and therefore their enactment of proxy agency, is shaped by the operation of social power within a socially situated network.

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[298] Pansardi, p. 84.
[299] Karen Evans, 'Concepts of Bounded Agency in Education, Work, and the Personal Lives of Young Adults', *International Journal of Psychology*, 42.2 (2007), 85–93 (p. 85).
[300] Albert Bandura, 'On the Functional Properties of Perceived Self-Efficacy Revisited', *Journal of Management*, 38.1 (2012), 9–44 (p. 12).
[301] Anthony King, 'The Odd Couple: Margaret Archer, Anthony Giddens and British Social Theory', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (2010), 253–60 (p. 259).
[302] John W Meyer and Ronald L Jepperson, 'The "Actors" of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency', *Sociological Theory*, 18.1 (2000), 100–120 (p. 101).
[303] Hewson, p. 13.

4.1 Authorial, Professional and Identity Agency

Isackes uses the term 'authorial agency' which he explains is the 'impact of hierarchical power in some forms of theatre making that privilege some authors over others'.[304] He suggests that this power manifests in the ways that the designer moves from the position of being a 'generative artist' to a 'reactive artist'. Isackes associates the generative with notions of authorship. He suggests that performance making hierarchies that position text and director *over* designer/scenographers prevent designer/scenographers from authoring work. Isackes identifies a paradox in 'design pedagogies' that prepare designers 'to participate in economies that often serve other interests at the expense of their own.' The idea of 'professional agency' proposed by Eteläpelto *et al*. is used to describe 'professional subjects and/or communities of influence' and how they 'influence, make choices, and take stances on their work and professional identities'. They suggest that agency, in this context, is closely related to power because 'power both constrains and resources professional agency at work'.[305] Finally, 'identity agency' is a concept devised by Hitlin and Elder and is concerned with repetition of 'role enactment or identity performance'.[306] I examine this concept in the context of the occupational role of designer/scenographer.

The review of agency literature demonstrates that agency has been conceptualised in the context of either/ or/ and separable, inseparable, subservient,

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[304] Richard M Isackes, Richard M Isackes, 'Rethinking The Pedagogy Of Performance Collaboration: Two Case Studies That Assert Authorial Agency In Scenographic Education', *Performance: Visual Aspects of Performance Practice.* (Salzburg, Austria, 13-15 November 2012), p. 2.
[305] Eteläpelto and others, p. 61.
[306] Hitlin and Elder, p. 179.

dominant or interdependent relations with social structure. Power is conceptualised in the concepts of power over, power to and social power. The literature suggests that an individual's capacity to act, and to either resist, refrain or act in one's own interests, is shaped by proxy agency where power over and to, and agency and structure are seen as interdependent. In this study, the socially situated network is the organisation of performance making. Furthermore, a designer/scenographers' capacity to act, or their expression and enactment of agency, is shaped by the operation of power within those social structures. It is this dimension that the study, through an examination of pedagogies and curricula, seeks to describe and document.

5. Chapter Two Conclusion

In this chapter, I have addressed the core topics associated with the thesis of the study, which is that expansive conceptualisations of design/scenography contribute to different positionalities of designer/scenographer and that this impacts upon how designer/scenographer agency is expressed and enacted through, and in, design/scenography education.

I have defined five discursive frames that problematise 'ontological questions about the essence of special artistic fields'[307], such as 'design' and 'scenography'. In so doing, I have shown the proliferation of conceptualisations that are inclusive of, and different to, notions of 'design' and 'scenography', illustrating why I have adopted the tactic of conflating design/scenography in this thesis; as a short-hand that does not claim that the conflation refers conceptually to the *same* practices, but

[307] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 10.

related practices.

I have shown that scholarly literature *about* the practice and effect of design/scenography has grown since the late 1990s/early 2000s. Conversely, there is a distinct absence of scholarly writing about design/scenography *education* in a UK context, and so I have established one of the contributions to knowledge that this thesis addresses; to contribute to knowledge about design/scenography education, curriculum and pedagogy.

The review of literature associated with pedagogy in the fields of creative and performing arts education demonstrates that there are signature pedagogies associated with these fields, and that they have close relations with constructivist models of learning; in particular folk, embodied, relational and place-based pedagogies. Finally, I have identified the three dimensions of agency that this thesis will examine; identity, professional and authorial agency. The diagram below summarises the conceptual framework that emerges from the literature review.

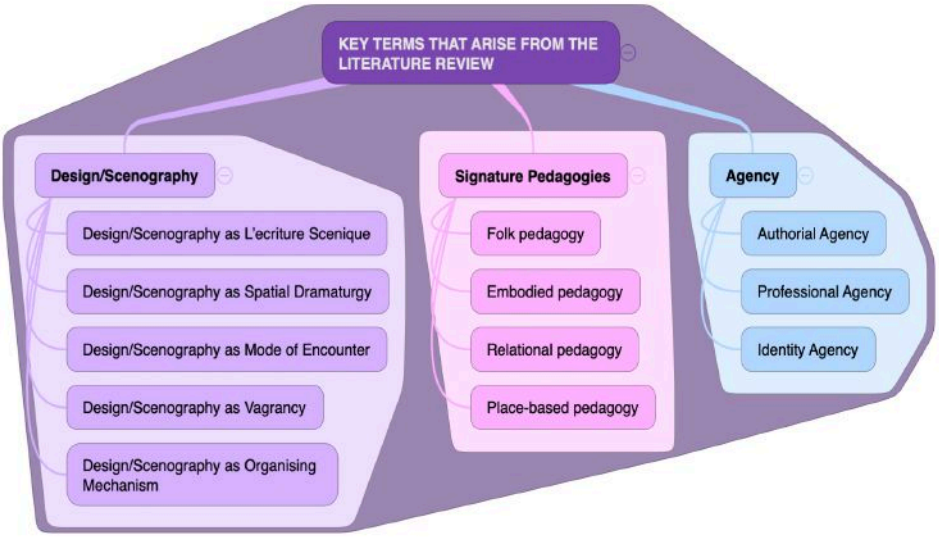

Figure i: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

In the introduction I explained that I make two methodological contributions to knowledge. I have adopted interdisciplinary approaches to research design and analysis and I have developed novel approaches to object elicitation in narrative inquiry. I will now explain, and reflect upon the methodology of this study, using Vasilachis de Gialdino's framework for 'epistemological reflection'.

2. Methodology and 'Epistemological Reflection'

The three stages of epistemological reflection defined by Vasilachis de Gialdino, are:

> 1. [H]ow reality can be known, 2. the relationship between the knower and what is known, 3. the characteristics, the principles, the assumptions that guide the process of knowing and the achievement of findings[1]

I shall first examine '*How reality can be known',* by examining the juxtaposition of research paradigm with the role of the doctoral researcher.

2.1 How Reality Can Be Known

> The most daunting of doctoral programme challenges is the expectation that graduate students conduct original research that generates new knowledge […] Reducing ignorance seems a better bet […] By ignorance, I mean the role and structure of collective deficits in academic understanding.[2]

Emphasising ignorance, Wagner claims, raises the question of 'whose

[1] Vasilachis de Gialdino, pp. 1–25.
[2] Jon Wagner, 'Ignorance in Educational Research', in *The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion*, ed. by Pat Thomson and Melanie Walker (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 31–42 (p. 35).

ignorance?'. Asking this question privileges interpretation over universal notions of truth.[3] This challenges a positivist ontological position that asserts that reality is independent from the researcher. I explained in the introduction to this thesis that the methodological stance I adopt in this study, assumes a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. This stance recognises that truth may be 'partial, situated and revisable'.[4] This does not mean that I claim truth does not exist. Instead, as Wagner suggests:

> We try instead to chart a reasonable course between the foolishness of not caring about truthfulness at all and the distortions of life and work that arise when we care only about truth, and particular truths at that.[5]

Instead, it is my aim to establish 'trustworthiness'.[6] One of the strategies that Shenton identifies to establish trustworthiness is to monitor 'the researcher's own developing constructions' by reflecting upon one's positionality in the research.[7]

2.2 The Relationship Between the Knower and What Is Known

A subjectivist epistemology recognises that it may not be possible to separate the experiences of the researcher from the topic of the research. Miller refers to this phenomenon as the 'autobiography of the question',[8] a notion that is conceptually similar to Dwyer and Buckle's concept of the 'personhood of the researcher'.[9] In

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[3] Wagner, p. 38.
[4] Melanie Walker and Pat Thomson, 'Becoming and Being a Doctoral Student', in *The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion*, ed. by Pat Thomson and Melanie Walker (London, 2010), pp. 27–30 (p. 27).
[5] Wagner, p. 41.
[6] Andrew K Shenton, 'Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects', *Education for Information*, 22 (2004), 63–75 (p. 63).
[7] Shenton, p. 68.
[8] Jane Miller, 'The Autobiography of the Question', *English Quarterly*, 27.3 (1995), 22–26 (p. 22).
[9] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L Buckle, 'The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8.1 (2009), 54–63 (p. 55).

this way, any claim to objectivity in research is confounded because the act of acknowledging one's position in relation to the object of research, 'is to admit the limits of one's purview from these positions'.[10] I am uniquely positioned in this study because I have worked in higher education for twenty-five years and so have experienced many of the changes that have taken place in higher education during this time. As a graduate of theatre studies, and of design, I am also able to bring this knowledge and expertise to the study. A further dimension that arises from my positionality is the interdisciplinary nature of the study. I am a Senior Lecturer in Work-based learning. This is not a *discipline* but a *context* that utilises perspectives from a range of disciplines to critically examine work places and practices. This reflects the interdisciplinary attitude I have adopted in relation to this study, and brings a unique perspective to the topic.

Wagner suggests that doctoral study should focus attention on 'blank spots' and 'blind spots' in knowledge. 'Blank spots' are those absences that are already familiar to researchers or 'matters that scholars know they don't understand'. For example, as I have demonstrated in the literature review, scholars are aware of the impact of hierarchy on role in performance making but have not fully explored this in the context of designer/scenographer positionality. In contrast, 'blind spots' are things that have not yet been noticed by researchers.[11] For example, design/scenography education literature is limited but and therefore an examination of pedagogies and curricula might reveal paradigms about design/scenography. However, a criticism of interdisciplinarity is that it can be perceived as 'eclectic',

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[10] Kirin Narayan, 'How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist?', *American Anthropologist*, 95.3 (1993), 671–86 (p. 679).
[11] Wagner, p. 33.

as Walker and Thomas observe:

> [D]isciplinary networks and boundaries are both social and intellectual, and these boundaries exercise control over what can count as knowledge and research in a discipline. Such boundary patrols are not friendly to the eclecticism of interdisciplinarity.[12]

I recognise that there are risks associated with interdisciplinarity but suggest that is a valid tactic because of the interdisciplinary nature of the design/scenography field, and because the study crosses two fields; design/scenography and education.

2.3 The Characteristics and Methods That Guide the Achievement of Findings

There are two parts to this study. The first is a case study reconstruction of the Motley Theatre Design Course and the second is a study of current design/scenography education. The common feature of both is *narrative inquiry.* In the next section, I will explain what narrative inquiry is, before explaining the research design of each study.

2.3.1 Narrative Inquiry and 'The Narrative Turn'

Polkinghorne describes narrative inquiry as 'a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action'.[13] Stories are how people make meaning from their experiences of the world. Therefore, narrative

[12] Walker and Thomson, p. 27.
[13] Donald E. Polkinghorne, 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8.1 (1995), 5–23 (p. 5).

inquiry is a way of 'thinking about experience'.[14] Clandinin and Rosiek suggest that narrative inquiry emerged in response to the decline of a positivist paradigm in social science research in the 1960s and is firmly located within an interpretivist research paradigm.[15] Narrative study has permeated the borders of many disciplines and is now cross-disciplinary.[16] For example, Savin-Baden and Wimpenny note the intersections between arts-related research and narrative inquiry,[17] identifying two turns in arts-related research. The first, they call the 'narrative turn',[18] that legitimised autobiographical approaches to research. This provided the foundation for the second critical turn, concerned with 'non-linguistic forms and blurred genres' in arts-related research. Although narrative inquiry is less common in theatre research, there are similarities between narrative inquiry and oral history. For example, Thomson refers to the expansion of oral history into narrative studies.[19]

Clandinin and Huber describe three dimensions of narrative inquiry; temporality, sociality, and place.[20] The temporal dimension recognises that 'events, people, and objects under study are in temporal transition'[21] because participants and researchers are writing and revising narratives in the flow of time. Gergen suggests that narratives may be influenced by current stations in life and relations

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[14] D. Jean. Clandinin and Janice Huber, 'Narrative Inquiry', in *International Encyclopedia of Education* (London: Elsevier Ltd., 2010), pp. 436–41 (p. 436).
[15] D. Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek, 'Mapping a Landscape of Narrative Inquiry: Borderland Spaces and Tensions', in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, ed. by D. Jean. Clandinin (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.), pp. 35–77 (p. 36).
[16] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 37.
[17] Maggi Savin-Baden and Katherine Wimpenny, *A Practical Guide to Arts-Related Research* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014), p. 8.
[18] Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, p. 16.
[19] Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *Oral History Review*, 34.1 (2007), 49–70 (p. 63).
[20] Clandinin and Huber, p. 436.
[21] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 73.

with others.[22] Clandinin and Huber argue that, for this reason, researchers cannot remove themselves from the inquiry relationship.[23] The second dimension, sociality, posits that narratives are socially and culturally located, and that narrative inquiry should consider the social, cultural and institutional narratives in which individual's experiences are situated.[24] The final dimension of narrative inquiry is place, which considers where the interview takes place and how this influences the narrative that emerges.

Gergen proposes that narratives are created by people to make sense of their present place in the world, and past events. As such narratives may be 'more than, less than, or other than "what happened."'.[25] She argues that stories should not be treated as isolated narratives but as co-created.[26] The recognition that the researcher and the researched are in a narrative relationship with one another, is the first turn in narrative inquiry.[27] The unique authorship associated with the teller of a story is supplanted by mutual authorship[28] which problematises notions of authority and truth. I recognise that the way I designed the focus group in the Motley case study, and the interviews for the study of current design/scenography courses, *generated*, rather than *gathered or collected,* the data I subsequently analysed. However, one of the reasons I adopted the methods of object and photo elicitation was an attempt

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[22] Mary Gergen, 'Once Upon a Time: A Narratologist's Tale', in *Narrative Analysis*, ed. by Colette Daiute and Cynthia Lightfoot (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2004), pp. 268–85 (p. 270).
[23] Clandinin and Huber, p. 436.
[24] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 43.
[25] Mary Gergen, p. 270.
[26] Mary Gergen, p. 280.
[27] Stefinee Pinnegar and J Gary Daynes, 'Locating Narrative Inquiry Historically: Thematics in the Turn to Narrative', in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, ed. by D. Jean. Clandinin (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2007), pp. 3–35 (p. 9).
[28] Mary Gergen, p. 280.

to keep the participants present during analysis of their narratives, and to disrupt the assumed authority I have as the writer of the narrative. Therefore, the strategy I adopt in the analysis in chapters five and six is first to summarise the narratives associated with interviewees, before then undertaking a thematic analysis *across* narratives.

2.3.2 Approaches to Analysis

Thematic analysis aims to identify themes or 'patterns of cultural meaning'.[29] Clandinin and Huber suggest that resisting the temptation to dissect is the main challenge in narrative inquiry.[30] According to Bateson, this arises from a residual positivist attitude which seeks to disassemble.[31] Gergen compares it to removing the bricks from a house:

> I came to believe that the analytical method of deconstructing stories into coded piles actually was undermining the aims of the research. It was as though I had a house before me, and I had decided to dismantle it to make various piles of bricks. The narrative structure was of central importance to me, and I did not want to lose it in the process of analysis.[32]

I experienced a tendency to dissemble in the early stages of analysis but by returning to the objects and photographs whole narratives became present again.

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[29] Judith C. Lapadat, 'Thematic Analysis', in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. by Albert J Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wibe (Thousand Oaks, California, 2012), pp. 926–27 (p. 926).
[30] Clandinin and Huber, p. 439.
[31] Catherine Mary Bateson, *Composing a Life* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989), p. 10.
[32] Mary Gergen, p. 272.

3. Research Design: Motley Theatre Design Course Case Study

In the next part of this chapter, I explain how the Motley case study provided an entry to the study, identifying some of the challenges I experienced, associated with an absent archive.

3.1 The Entry to the Study: Newspaper Archives

At the beginning of this study, I was interested in the relationship between occupational identity formation and education, engaging with work by Torstendahl,[33] Perkin,[34] Dingwal[35] and Frame.[36] This prompted the first research question for this study, which is: *When and why did it become necessary for design/scenography to be taught in the UK?*

I searched newspaper archives to identify the earliest references to design/scenography courses in theatre schools. The earliest reference to design/scenography education that I was able to identify, is in 1922, reporting on a proposal by the Actors' Association to form a 'Central College of Theatrics', which would include 'stage design and decoration'.[37] Then, in 1936, there is an advertisement in *The Times,* advertising places for 'A new group of beginners'; for courses in 'production', 'stage management' and a 'Course in Decor by Motley',[38] at the London Theatre Studio. There are reviews of productions at the London Theatre Studio until 1939, when the amalgamation of three theatre schools is

[33] Torstendahl.
[34] Harold James Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[35] Robert Dingwall, *Essays on Professions* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2008).
[36] Frame.
[37] Unknown, 'Proposed College of Theatrics', *The Times*, 20 April 1922, p. 6.
[38] Unknown, 'Theatres: London Theatre Studio, Auditions', *The Times*, 9 July 1936, p. 12.

announced; The London Theatre Studio, The Old Vic Dramatic School and the London Mask Theatre School. The article suggests that 'Classes in décor […] are not to be held for the present, but it is hoped to establish a department of stage design in the near future'.[39] In 2011 there was an announcement in *The Stage* that the Motley Theatre Design Course was closing. The article describes the Motley course's association with the London Theatre Studio, describing it as 'one of the UK's longest running courses'.[40] I have been unable to comprehensively establish that this course is the earliest example of a design/scenography course in the UK, but it is certainly one of the earliest. Furthermore, it is an example of informal vocational provision that provided the context for the emergence of the field of design/scenography, as I have already discussed in chapter two. Before I address the challenges that arose from the absence of an archive associated with the course, I will first explain why I have chosen the form of a case study, and what I mean when I use this term.

3.2 The Case Study Method

Elman *et al*. explain that case studies are often used within social sciences, the natural sciences and the humanities,[41] and are identified as a method in theatre and performance research. For example, Kershaw and Nicholson's *Research Methods in Performance*, is structured around 'twenty-five or so case studies',[42] but

[39] Unknown, 'Dramatic Schools: Three Turned into One', *The Times*, 6 October 1939, p. 6.
[40] Alistair Smith, 'Motley Design Course to Close', *The Stage*, 17 February 2011, p. 4.
[41] Colin Elman, John Gerring, and James Mahoney, 'Case Study Research : Putting the Quant Into the Qual', *Sociological Methods and Research*, 45.3 (2016), 375–91 (p. 376).
[42] Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson, *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 12.

the term is used here in, what Tight calls, a 'common-sense or generic fashion'.[43] There are divergent views about what case studies are but as Tight, and Thomas and Myers provide a detailed critique, I will not reprise these debates here.[44] However, there is agreement that a case study is defined as such because it focuses on a single case of something.[45] Because of this, a case study is better described as a research strategy rather than a method.[46]

Thomas suggests that the subject of a case study should be chosen because 'it is an interesting or unusual or revealing example through which the lineaments of the object can be refracted.' The Motley course is an example of 'a key case',[47] because it exemplifies the objects of the research, and may be described as 'a conspicuously good example of something'. [48] The Motley course exemplifies the object of the research because many Motley alumni became teachers of design/scenography in the UK,[49] and the course is a good example of design education, having existed for seventy years despite not being formally accredited by an awarding body.

Therefore, I adopt the methodology described by Thomas and Myers, who suggest that a case study should not be defined as a single case, because it is a single example, but because it is a case *of* something. It is the *of* that constitutes the

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[43] Malcolm Tight, 'The Curious Case of Case Study: A Viewpoint', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13.4 (2010), 329–39 (p. 329).
[44] Gary Thomas and Kevin Myers, *The Anatomy of the Case Study* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2015).
[45] Lorna Hamilton and Connie Corbett-Whittier, *Using Case Study in Education Research*, *Using Case Study in Education Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2013), p. 7.
[46] Keith Punch, *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative & Qualitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005), p. 144..
[47] Gary Thomas, 'A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure', *Qualitative Enquiry*, 17.6 (2011), 511–21 (p. 514).
[48] Thomas and Myers, p. 122.
[49] 'Where We've Taught', *Motley Alumni: The Home and Friends of Motley Theatre Design Course*, 2011 <https://motleyalumni.wordpress.com/where-weve-taught/> [accessed 15 February 2017].

analytical frame.[50] Thomas proposes that a case study has two elements; a subject and an object:

> The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame - an object - within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.[51]

There are two analytical objects that I examine. The first is the social and cultural context that influenced the earliest iteration of the course in the 1930s. I recognise that there is a thirty-year gap between this version of the course and the independent Motley course (1966-2010). However, Mullin observes that 'the course remained consistent in its aesthetic and organisation' over this period.[52] Harris, the course director, makes this claim too. In an interview with Michael Billington in *The Guardian* in 1991, she explains:

> It's all based […] on the work of Michel Saint-Denis at the London Theatre Studio in the Thirties and the Old Vic School in the late Forties. He believed that the most important person in the theatre was the dramatist, then the actors and then the director and designer. He argued that the designer's job was to show the play and the actors to the best possible advantage. Also that they should not decorate; they should design.[53]

The analysis of the focus group with Motley alumni, in chapter five shows there was consistent approach to education over a period of forty years, supporting Harris' claim, and Mullins' observation, that the course did not fundamentally change over time. The second analytical object that I explore through the case study is the expression of designer/scenographer positionality and agency on the course.

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[50] Gary Thomas, p. 516.
[51] Gary Thomas, p. 513.
[52] Mullin, p. 207..
[53] Michael Billington, 'Costume Drama', *The Guardian*, 31 January 1991, p. 29.

I will now return to the issue of the absent archive associated with the Motley course, and how I address this.

3.3 The Absence of the Archive

Davies *et al*. conclude that:

> Theatrical and performance histories are concerned with the ephemeral and the intangible: they may attempt to tell 'how it was' but may well depend on traces that are too insubstantial to enable anything more than a speculative engagement with the past.[54]

Essin suggests that there is an absence of archival documentation associated with backstage labour, which she attributes to 'the wish of designers and technicians […] to work relatively unseen, preferring to affect theatrical illusion […] from the offstage spaces'.[55] Visibility may be associated with power. For example, as I observed in chapter two, Howard suggests that a designer/scenographer is 'like a wife':

> [A theatre] designer had to be like a wife – supportive, a friend and a partner, ready to co-operate at all times and on all occasions, good with money, decorative, good sense of humour, and accepting that no relationship is finite [sic] and when someone else came along, you would be passed over.[56]

Howard's use of a gendered term indicates that with this inequality comes relative visibility. Fletcher analyses job roles that are associated with the feminine, suggesting that an unequal power relationship results in 'disappearing acts' of those

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[54] Jim Davis and others, 'Researching Theatre History and Historiography', in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Baz Kershaw and Helen Richardson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 86–110 (p. 97).
[55] Christin Essin, 'An Aesthetic of Backstage Labor', *Theatre Topics*, 21.1 (2011), 33–48 (p. 33).
[56] Pamela Howard, 'Directors and Designers: Is There a Different Direction?', p. 26.

occupying the feminine role because achievement is treated as 'an individual phenomenon' whereas 'support activities, although essential, [are] commonly devalued'.[57] This inequality may also contribute to the absence of theatre histories associated with design/scenography education.

There are three archives of Motley materials; *The British Library Sound Archive*, the *University of Bristol Theatre Collection*; and a digital archive, *The Motley Collection of Theatre and Costume* at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. The *University of Bristol Theatre Collection* includes materials left by Margaret Harris to Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. The archive includes course exhibition flyers, some design materials and correspondence between Margaret Harris and Motley graduates. *The Motley Collection of Theatre and Costume* at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is a digital collection of Motley designs, photographs and model boxes. The *British Library Sound Archive* includes around eighteen hours of oral history interview cassette recordings with Margaret Harris, carried out by Cathy Courtney in 1992. There are a further three hours of interviews by Cathy Courtney from 1993, with Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, in front of an audience of Motley students. David Gothard was the founder and artistic director of Riverside Studios, between 1976 and 1985, with the Motley course resident at Riverside between 1979 and 1987. Alison Chitty joined the Motley course as a co-director in 1992, becoming course director in 2000.[58] I was unable to locate the course archive,

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[57] Joyce K. Fletcher, *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power, and Relational Practice at Work* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), p. 11.
[58] 'Sir Misha Black Awards: 2007 Alison Chitty RDI', 2007 <http://www.mishablackawards.org.uk/medal/chitty-rdi> [accessed 19 February 2017].

despite making a number of enquiries. I approached one of the convenors of the Motley alumni association, to enquire about materials associated with the course. They explained that materials had been archived but the location of the archive was unknown.

Brozgal proposes a reconceptualisation of the archive, from 'documents or a place where documents are kept' to a notion of archives that are 'all around us'.[59] Therefore, Motley alumni represent a living archive of the Motley course. I adopted two methods to construct a case study of the course; archive research and narrative inquiry using object elicitation in a focus group setting. Courtney's oral history recordings provided the foundation for the focus group design and so I will now briefly discuss the method of oral history.

3.4 The Oral History Method and the 'Composed Account'

The oral history method has been described as a method for capturing insights into the past, where documentary evidence might be limited.[60] Tinkler offers a contrary view, arguing that oral histories do not provide insight about the past, but instead draw attention to the ways in which memory is constructed by interviewees through subsequent experiences, in different contexts, and in the moment of the interview.[61] Thomson suggests that oral histories may assist in articulating

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[59] Lia Brozgal, 'In the Absence of the Archive (Paris, October 17, 1961)', *South Central Review*, 31.1 (2014), 34–54 (p. 34).
[60] Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 'Analytic Strategies for Oral History Interviews', in *Inside Interviewing*, ed. by James A Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), pp. 347–67 (p. 347).
Tamara Giles-Vernick, 'Oral Histories: Oral Histories as Methods and Sources', in *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: Essays & Bibliographic Sources on Research Design and Methods*, ed. by Ellen Perecman and Sarah. R. Curran (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), pp. 85–102 (p. 85).
[61] Penny Tinkler, 'Photo-Interviews: Listening to Talk About Photos', in *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2014), pp. 173–94 (p. 186).

suppressed histories.[62] Courtney sympathises with this view:

> The language used by critics and academics when writing about artists was rarely that spoken by artists themselves, whose concerns are often very different.[63]

The fallibility of memory was perceived as a weakness of the oral history method, according to Holstein and Gubrium.[64] However, Tinkler suggests that truth claims in oral histories are unstable, because interviewees use 'composure' to construct memories in order to present a version of themselves.[65] Similarly, Courtney concludes that 'the interviewee's perception of the truth [is] sometimes more interesting than the factual truth'.[66]

The distinction between what Courtney describes as 'factual truth' and 'perception of the truth' reveals contested notions of history. Jenkins suggests that history encompasses two concepts; history as a discourse about 'the past', that may be written, recorded and commented upon, and 'the past' defined in a temporal way, as something 'prior to' now.[67] He argues that history cannot claim to be the past, it may only ever be a discursive construction of the past. However, as Davies points out, the recognition that history is constructed does not provide justification for disregarding archival materials.[68] If the oral history method fails in its attempt to provide access to truths about the past,[69] then it is important that researchers attend

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[62] Alistair Thomson, p. 53.
[63] Cathy Courtney, 'Report: Taped', *Art Monthly*, October 1995, p. 41.
[64] Gubrium and Holstein, p. 348.
[65] Tinkler, 'Photo-Interviews: Listening to Talk About Photos', p. 186.
[66] Courtney, p. 41.
[67] Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History*, *Routledge Classics* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.
[68] Davis and others, p. 91.
[69] Giles-Vernick, p. 90.

to *how* something is said as much as *what* is said in an interview.[70] Therefore, when I listened to the cassette recordings of Courtney's interviews with Harris, I paid attention to what Harris chooses to emphasise about the course, attending to recurrent motifs about Harris' philosophy about design/scenography.[71]

Harris explains her philosophy about design/scenography but does not refer to the curriculum or pedagogy of the course. Therefore, the interviews assisted me in defining six Motley principles of design/scenography:

- Education should be enmeshed with an extended professional network.
- Costumes should assist the movement of actors on stage.
- Settings should accommodate, and be built around, the movement of body in space.
- Designers should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources.
- Design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble.
- Designer and design should serve the play

In the next part of the chapter, I will explain how I designed and carried out a focus group with Motley alumni, to examine these principles in more depth.

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[70] Lara Nielsen, 'Working the Field with Oral History: Talking Towards the Research Encounter in Theatre and Performance Studies', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 24.1 (2009), 99–116 (p. 103).
[71] Gubrium and Holstein, p. 349.

3.5 The Focus Group Method and Object Elicitation

The reason for using the focus group method was because it emphasises shared rather than individual experience.[72] Clandinin and Huber observe that narrative inquiries usually begin with interviewees being invited to share their stories. A method that is sometimes used to stimulate talk is to use 'photographs or memory-box items' to trigger stories.[73] Therefore, I asked focus group participants to choose objects that reminded them of their time studying on the course.

I became interested in object elicitation following a workshop I attended, facilitated by Susan Bell in 2013.[74] Bell argues that objects are integral to identity because they do not merely reflect who we are but are the very things that make us in the first place.[75] As Miller proposes:

> If you keep peeling off our layers you find - absolutely nothing left. There is no true inner self. We are not Emperors represented by clothes, because if we remove the clothes there isn't an inner core. The clothes were not superficial, they actually were what made us what we think we are.[76]

The method of object elicitation arises from the 'material turn' that recognises the role that material culture plays in social lives.[77] Therefore, I identified two benefits arising from the method. The first benefit is that participants had control over which object they chose and this shaped the focus of the discussion. The

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[72] David Morgan, 'Focus Groups As A Qualitative Research', in *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011), pp. 8–17 (p. 10).
[73] Clandinin and Huber, p. 437.
[74] Susan E Bell, 'Objects, Memory and Narrative' Workshop on memory and object elicitation (University of London, Goldsmiths New Cross, London, UK, July 4, 2013).
[75] Mary Ellen Bell and Susan E Bell, 'What to Do with All This "Stuff"? Memory, Family and Material Objects', *Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies*, 8 (2012), 63–84 (p. 82).
[76] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 13.
[77] Woodward, p. 1.

second benefit, experienced by me as a participant in Bell's workshop, is that the object becomes a substitute for the speaking subject and the feelings associated with a subject's narrative.[78] This displacement onto/into the object allowed the emergence of rich, personal and intimate narratives, whilst mitigating any discomfort associated with sharing memories with a group. My experience echoes that of Hoskins who describes this as a 'distanced form of introspection'.[79] The intersection of object and self is important because, as Bell suggests:

> [Objects] become vehicles for us to know ourselves and […] our place in the larger world. Objects can be sensed. They can be touched and smelled, picked up and put down, over and over again. These objects have been the vehicles to our memories.[80]

For some of the focus group participants, forty years had elapsed since they had studied on the course and so I anticipated that objects would bring the past moment into the present of the focus group. Furthermore, I hoped that object elicitation would create an environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their memories. Before I explain in detail how I designed and carried out the focus group, I will first consider the particular qualities of objects that facilitate memory.

3.6 Objects, Memory and Punctum

Beckstead *et al*. suggest that 'memory is not only 'stored in brains' but also distributed through social artefacts and cultural tools'.[81] I will examine this notion

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[78] Susan E Bell, 'Objects, Memory and Narrative', *Workshop on Memory and Object Elicitation* (University of London, Goldsmiths New Cross, London, UK, July 4, 2013, 2013).
[79] Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 2.
[80] Bell and Bell, p. 68.
[81] Zachary Beckstead and others, 'Collective Remembering Through The Materiality and Organization of War Memorials', *Journal of Material Culture*, 16.2 (2011), 193–213 (p. 195).

using Roland Barthes' notion of punctum[82] or 'points of memory',[83] described by Hirsch and Spitzer as 'points of intersection between past and present, memory and post-memory, personal and cultural recollection'.[84]

In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes describes two effects of photographs on the spectator; 'studium' and 'punctum'. Studium is used to describe a 'polite interest' that one might take in a photograph.[85] Studium is intentional and 'coded', revealing the photographer's deliberate choices.[86] It represents an attentive encounter with, or study of, the photographer's intentions. In contrast, the punctum is a:

> [S]ting, speck, cut, little hole-and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's punctum is that accident […] which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).[87]

Hirsch and Spitzer apply the concept of punctum to objects:

> [W]hile some remnants merely give information about the past, like the studium, others prick and wound and grab and puncture, like the punctum - unsettling assumptions, exposing the unexpected.[88]

Albano uses the phrase 'biographical objects' to describe objects that represent 'tangible parts of our past as well as of our present because of the feelings […] they are able to evoke'.[89] The effect of this temporal quality of punctum is to bring the past into the present, as Barthes remarks, 'I can never deny that the thing

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[82] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc, 1999), pp. 25–60.
[83] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, 'Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission', *Poetics Today*, 27.2 (2006), 353–83 (p. 358).
[84] Hirsch and Spitzer, p. 353.
[85] Barthes, pp. 25–27.
[86] Barthes, p. 51.
[87] Barthes, p. 27.
[88] Hirsch and Spitzer, p. 358.
[89] Caterina Albano, 'Displaying Lives: The Narrative of Objects in Biographical Exhibitions', *Museum and Society*, 5.1 (2007), 15–28 (p. 17).

has been there. There is a superimposition here of reality, and of the past'.[90]

Barthes' notion of punctum refers to the presence of something in a photograph that is incidental and unintended on behalf of the photographer. However, the detail evokes something in the viewer *beyond* what is there:

> The punctum is not to be confused with 'shock': It is not the result of a deliberate attempt by the photographer to surprise. On the contrary, it is a detail which accidentally disturbs, arousing all sorts of feelings […] characterised by their intensity […] the paradox is that the punctum is both in the photograph […] and in the eyes of the beholder.[91]

Barthes gives an example:

> [T]his photograph has worked within me, and later on I realized that the real punctum was the necklace she was wearing; for (no doubt) it was this same necklace (a slender ribbon of braided gold) which I had seen worn by someone in my own family, and which, once she died, remained shut up in a family box of old jewellery (this sister of my father never married, lived with her mother as an old maid, and I had always been saddened whenever I thought of her dreary life).[92]

This passage illustrates an important feature of punctum which is concerned with memory and feelings. Barthes explains that there are two dimensions to this memorial quality of punctum which he calls the 'temporal' and 'expansive' dimensions of punctum.

The temporal effect of punctum may be defined as the past in the present moment. Barthes refers to the temporal quality of punctum as 'the lacerating emphasis of the noeme ("that-has-been")'.[93] For example, the artist Paula Salischika, in a project entitled *The Memory of Objects* brings together objects with

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[90] Barthes, p. 76.
[91] Mireille Ribière, 'Barthes and Photography', in *Humanities Insights: Barthes* (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, LLP, 2008), pp. 60–67 (p. 64).
[92] Barthes, p. 53.
[93] Barthes, p. 96.

photographs of their deceased owners who are, in some cases, photographed wearing the item. It creates a sense of simultaneity between the past and the present, as she observes:

> [T]he inanimate cannot die. After we are gone, we might be remembered through small things, pieces of who we were will be kept by others in an attempt to hold on to the past.[94]

The second dimension of punctum that Barthes refers to is the expansive effect. This arises from an intersection of the viewer with the thing being viewed:[95] '[W]hether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add […] and what is nonetheless already there'. Barthes suggests that this 'blind field' may only be present where there is punctum.[96] Pearce notes a similar effect to Barthes' blind field, in objects, that she calls the 'virtual dimension' of the object:

> The object activates our own faculties, and the product of this creative activity is the virtual dimension of the object, which endows it with present reality.[97]

A quality of an object becomes significant to the owner of the object because it evokes an expansive dimension in the observer; a blind field beyond what is there.

The blind field that Barthes describes appears to share conceptual similarities with Wagner's notion of the 'blind spot' in disciplines.[98] Both the blind field and the blind spot are *present* for an observer, but they may not be *seen*. Therefore, my positionality as a researcher has a similar effect to Barthes' punctum. I look at the

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[94] Paula Salischika, 'The Memory of Objects', 2018 <http://www.pausal.co.uk/projects/the-memory-of-objects> [accessed 2 October 2018].
[95] Barthes, p. 48.
[96] Barthes, pp. 56–57.
[97] Susan Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning: Or Narrating the Past', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19–29 (p. 26).
[98] Wagner, p. 27.

field of design/scenography, just as Barthes might do a photograph, and I notice something in the field of design/scenography, just as Barthes notices a necklace in a photograph, *because* of my positionality in the research because the blind spot resides, to use Ribiére's expression, 'in the eyes of the beholder'.[99]

In chapter five, I explain how objects chosen by the focus group participants, functioned as vehicles to memories by examining the temporal and expansive effects of punctum prompted by their objects. Albano observes that objects appear to have an 'authentic presence' because they are located in the 'present perfect', whilst they reference the past.[100] Therefore, narratives that emerge from objects should not be treated as more authentic or less constructed, because of this quality. For example, the participants' memories of the Motley course are also constructed in the light of their subsequent experiences. Furthermore, participants' object choices are shaped by their biographies as much as by their experiences of the Motley course. Therefore, I approach narrative inquiry in the spirit described by Clandinin and Rosiek who describe narrative as 'the form of representation that describes human experience as it unfolds through time'.[101] The analysis in chapter five aims to give a trustworthy account of participant narratives, recognising that memories have been shaped by sociality and temporality. Furthermore, analysis necessitates changing autobiographical data into biographical data and will therefore be 'shot through with subjectivity, interpretation, and imagination'.[102] In

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[99] Ribière, p. 65.
[100] Albano, p. 20.
[101] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 41.
[102] Mark Freeman, 'Autobiographical Understanding and Narrative Inquiry', in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2007), pp. 120–45 (p. 128).

the next part of this chapter, I will explain how I carried out the focus group.

3.7 Motley Focus Group Ethics and Recruitment

Ethical approval for the focus group was granted by The University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee.[103] I designed a website for participants, circulated at the recruitment stage.[104] I adopted a purposive sampling technique to recruit participants; selecting alumni who had attended the course at different times to examine how the course had changed over time. I recruited participants in two phases. First, the convenor of the Motley alumni network circulated an invitation on my behalf. Through this approach, I recruited participants who had studied on the course in the 1980s and 1990s. I then made direct approaches to designer/scenographers who had attended the course since 1966. Seven participants were recruited.

3.8 Three Stages of Object Elicitation

I explained earlier in this section, that I adapted Bell's approach to object elicitation. There are four stages to Bell's approach; an individual reflection, a paired interview, a group discussion and an individual evaluation. There are three stages to the method I used. The first part of the exercise is an individual reflection, using questions adapted from Bell's framework.[105] Participants had ten minutes to respond to the questions, and they could draw as well as write their responses. This

[103] Appendix I: Ethical Approval from The University of Birmingham
[104] Harriet Richmond, 'Motley Theatre Design Course Focus Group, Friday 14th March 2014, 10:00am - 12:00pm', 2014 <http://motleydesign.blogspot.co.uk/> [accessed 1 April 2017].
[105] Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object Elicitation Exercise

was in recognition that they are visual artists and may be more comfortable/confident with expressing ideas through drawing than writing. In part two of the exercise, participants were arranged into two pairs and one group of three, and asked to share their responses from part one, with each other. Then, they were given five minutes to capture aspects of their discussion in writing and drawing. In part three of the exercise, participants were then asked to introduce their object to the wider group, and to share their thoughts and discussions. Different 'field texts'[106] were generated from the focus group, including handwritten/drawn response sheets from focus group participants,[107] transcripts of the focus group[108] and photographs of objects.[109] Now that I have explained how the focus group was carried out, I will make the case for why my approach to object elicitation constitutes an original methodological contribution to knowledge.

3.9 Methodological Contribution to Knowledge

Object elicitation is a method used in social science research to facilitate memory recall in life history research. Nordstrom calls this approach the 'ensemble of life' because it represents a theoretical entanglement between individuals and the objects that surround them.[110] Whilst objects are a recognised source of inspiration in devised theatre processes,[111] the new contribution to knowledge that I claim is

[106] Clandinin and Huber, p. 439.
[107] Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object-Elicitation Exercise
[108] Appendix III: Motley Focus Group Transcription
[109] Appendix IV: Photographs of Objects
[110] Susan Naomi Nordstrom, 'Object-Interviews: Folding, Unfolding, and Refolding Perceptions of Objects', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12.1 (2013), 237–57 (p. 250).
[111] Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

that I have adapted and transferred the object elicitation method to the disciplinary context of theatre and performance research. The second claim that I make is that the *social* experience is often invoked in discussions about object interviews.[112] However, accounts about the method refer exclusively to its use in one-to-one interview settings. In this study, I have used object elicitation in a group setting to examine participant memories of shared experiences.

3.10 Summary

The Motley case study emerged from the first research question, that aims to establish when and why it became necessary for theatre design to be taught and learned in the UK. The absence of a course archive informed my decision to reconstruct the Motley course using the memories of Motley alumni, arising from the method of object elicitation. This then enabled me to address the remaining three research questions in relation to the Motley course, namely; how designer agency is conceptualised in pedagogy and curriculum; how design education positions designer/scenographers in performance making and the relation between these two dimensions. In the next part of this chapter, I will describe and evaluate the research design of the second part of this study.

4. Research Design: Study of Current Design/Scenography Education

I established in chapter two that critical scholarly literature associated with

[112] Woodward, p. 1.

design/scenography education is limited. This informed my decision to conduct a study of current design/scenography education. I decided to examine several current courses, for two reasons. First, as Stevens, McGettigan and Collini make clear, higher education provision and participation in the UK has grown significantly since the 1990s.[113] Second, as demonstrated in the literature review, conceptualisations of design/scenography since the millenium have expanded. These factors informed my decision to interview several course leaders, as a way of capturing the diversity of provision. I decided to interview course leaders and not course teams because of time limitations.

I identified a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate design/scenography courses in England and Wales by identifying courses through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Scottish HEI's are not included in this study because they are subject to different legislation and policy with oversight by the Scottish Parliament. Fourteen course leaders were invited to participate in an interview, with eight of these subsequently being interviewed. The purposive sample sought to represent different philosophies, practices and educational contexts. I approached course leaders at two Russell Group institutions in order to secure a representative sample of research intensive institutions, but I did not receive responses to the interview invitation. This absence represents a gap in this study because, as the literature review in chapter two suggests, the metascenographic turn in the discipline may be more apparent in a research-

[113] Robert Stevens, *University to Uni: The Politics of Higher Education in England since 1944* (London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2004); Andrew McGettigan, *The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education* (London: Pluto Press, 2013); Stefan Collini, *What Are Universities For?* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

intensive setting. Therefore, further research in these institutional contexts is needed to examine this in more detail.

Ethics approval was sought and granted by The University of Birmingham ethics approval committee. Ethical considerations included assuring participants of anonymity and confidentiality and storage and disposal of data.[114] Participant information was made available on a website.[115] Interviewees were invited to bring a photograph to the interview that they felt represented the philosophy of the course they lead. An ethical issue that I had not foreseen was that participants might appear in the photographs that they had selected. Therefore, in one case it was necessary to obscure their face, so they cannot be identified. In the next section, I will define photo-interviewing and consider some of the perceived benefits of this as a method.

4.1 Photo-Interviewing

Harper defines photo-elicitation as introducing images into interviews.[116] But, as Weber observes, it is the 'paying attention' to images that makes them important to scholarship.[117] Rose[118] and Lapenta[119] have commented on the growth of photo-interviewing in research. Ventrella suggests that this is due to a 'visual

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[114] Appendix I: Ethical Approval from the University of Birmingham
[115] Harriet Richmond, 'Pedagogy and the Role of the Visual in Theatre Performance: Course Leader Interview Information', 2014 <http://stagedesignresearch.blogspot.co.uk/> [accessed 1 April 2017].
[116] Douglas Harper, 'Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation', *Visual Studies*, 17.1 (2002), 13–26 (p. 13).
[117] Sandra Weber, 'Visual Images in Research', in *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*, ed. by Gary J. Knowles and Arda L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), pp. 42–54 (p. 42).
[118] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, 3rd edn (London: Sage, 2012), pp. 3–4.
[119] Francesco Lapenta, 'Some Theoretical and Methodological Views on Photo-Elicitation', in *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*, ed. by Eric Margolis and Luc Pauwels (London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2012), pp. 201–13 (p. 201).

turn' in humanities and social science research methods.[120] The act of paying attention to images foregrounds visuality as a socially constructed experience. For example, the term 'image' is often used to make a distinction between the 'original' and its 'image copy'. Weber proposes that this reflects an ontology which is positivist in outlook; the difference between the 'real' world, and a constructed representation of that world in the form of a photograph. By paying attention to images, the constructed nature of social experience might also be made visible. The reasons for choosing an image can reveal as much as the actual content of the image.[121] Just as choosing an image is a construction so is the context for seeing an image.[122] For example, by asking participants to choose photographs that represented course philosophy, I constructed a frame for *seeing* the photograph.

Earlier in this chapter, I observed that narratives occur in the flow of time and are shaped by their telling in a particular context and moment. Photographs also have a temporal dimension because they capture past events, specifically, a split-second in time. Tinkler argues that viewing photographs, and constructing narratives from them, is temporal because an image may only be seen as significant in the light of current events.[123]

4.2 The Interviewer/Interviewee Relationship

Photo-interviewing raises questions about the roles of interviewer and

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[120] Francesco Ventrella, 'Visual Turn', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2015, pp. 207–13 (p. 207).
[121] Weber, p. 46.
[122] Rose, p. 15.
[123] Penny Tinkler, *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2014), p. 184.

participant, prompting questions such as who chooses/creates the image? How is the narrative constructed and by whom? Who controls what is talked about? These questions are concerned with how power operates in interviews. Lapenta describes this as the epistemological problem of photo-interviewing; 'whose knowledge did selected pictures actually represent?'.[124]

One way of addressing this is to consider how photographs are introduced into interviews.[125] They can be 'found' or made by interviewees, or co-produced.[126] The epistemological conundrum of how photographs are generated highlights the operation of power between interviewer and interviewee. In this study, participants controlled the production/choice of the image. As a consequence, the chosen images are a mixture of found images, photographs taken by the interviewees and one object.[127] Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that narratives are co-constructed in research interviews, by participant and researcher. Similarly, the photograph-as-narrative, is also co-constructed. There is an element of collaboration between interviewer and interviewee as they look at the photograph together. This sense of mutual discovery, suggests Tinkler, can aid rapport and build mutual trust. Participant-generated photographs enable interviewees to direct the interview, destabilising researcher authority.[128] Furthermore, photographs take pressure off the interviewer and interviewee, because attention is focused on the image.[129]

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[124] Lapenta, p. 205.
[125] Hurworth, p. 2.
[126] Lapenta, pp. 206–7.
[127] Appendix V: Interview Photographs
[128] Tinkler, 'Photo-Interviews: Listening to Talk About Photos', pp. 174–75.
[129] Marisol Clark-Ibáñez, 'Framing the Social World With Photo-Elicitation Interviews', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47.12 (2004), 1507–27 (p. 1512).

4.3 The Polysemic Image

Weber suggests that photographs enable people to manage complex narratives because they are able to 'keep the whole and the part in view'.[130] Harper describes this as a 'polysemic' quality of photographs where multiple meanings may be present at the same time.[131] This quality may assist in revealing hidden, tacit and ignored aspects of knowledge.[132]

There are three reasons why I chose photo-interviewing to facilitate narrative inquiry. First, photographs are subject to the same analytical frames as narratives, namely sociality, temporality and place. Second, photographs represent a third party in the interview, foregrounding the dynamic between interviewer and participant. Finally, photographs have a polysemic quality; revealing tacit values and beliefs that may be hidden to the participant but visible to the interviewer.

4.4 The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule has three sections.[133] In part one, I provided my autobiography as a way of both situating myself in the research as a way of inviting the interviewee to then introduce their autobiography. This progresses to the photo-interview section, where the participant and I look at the image together. The final section examines the internal and external factors impacting the course. I adopted a semi-structured approach to the interview that allowed me to pursue issues raised by the participants. I placed the photo element in the middle part of the interview,

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[130] Weber, p. 45.
[131] Harper, p. 15.
[132] Lapenta, p. 206.
[133] Appendix VI: Interview Schedule

following Mason and Davies' suggestion that starting with the photo element, means that images dominate the interview agenda.[134]

4.5 Photographs and Preparations for the Interviews

Participants were invited to bring a photograph which captures the philosophy of their course. However, just one of the interviewees provided a single photograph. In one case, an interviewee gave me access to sixty-nine images. Other interviewees brought between two and five images. I had not anticipated that any of the interviewees would not bring an image but two did not. The absence of a photograph impacted on both interviews because it was challenging to move these interviewees on from the first part, concerned with biography, onto questions of course philosophy. One of these interviewees gave me an object after the interview. The object was a small bound hardback exhibition catalogue of student work.

I decided that I did not want participants to reflect on their photographs before the interview because I wanted a spontaneous response to the image in the interview. I was concerned that asking participants to prepare for the interview, would discourage them from participating. With hindsight, here may be benefits associated with examining photographs, prior to the interview taking place, so that more detailed questions about the specific image and its relationship to course philosophy might be considered. To analyse the photographs chosen by participants, I used Rose's model for the interpretation of visual materials.[135]

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[134] Jennifer Mason and Katherine Davies, 'Coming to Our Senses? A Critical Approach to Sensory Methodology', *Qualitative Research*, 9.5 (2009), 587–603 (p. 594).
[135] Rose, p. 21.

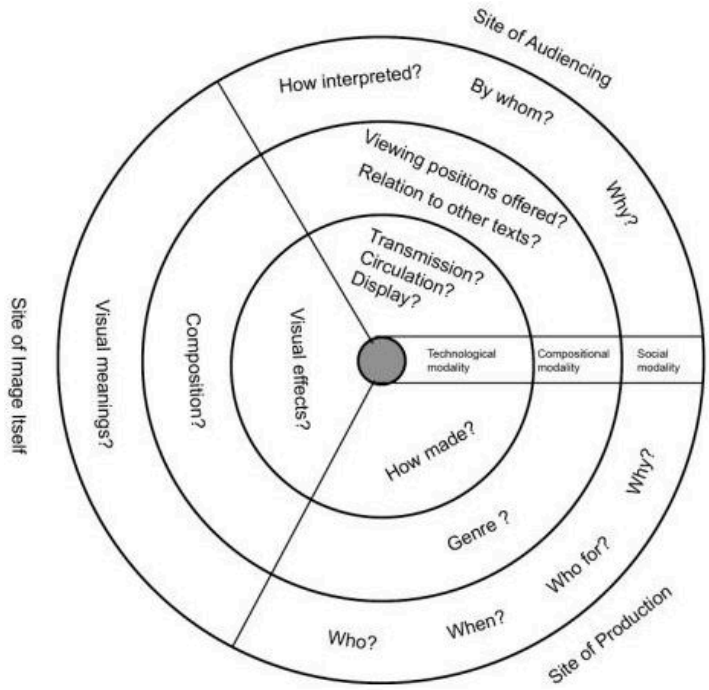

Figure ii: Rose's Model for the Interpretation of Visual Materials

The social modality encompasses economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image/object. The analysis considers the 'institutions and practices' that surround images chosen by participants. For example, I asked course leaders to *choose an image which represents your course and its philosophy.*

There are two things I would do differently if I used photo-interviewing again. The first is that I would not restrict interviewees to one image. This would give me the opportunity to evaluate how interviewees use collections of photographs to construct narrative. The second is that I would establish a pre-interview relationship with the interviewee, by asking them to share their reflections on the image in advance of the interview. This would give me the opportunity to focus on specific concerns of each participant. Furthermore, by introducing the photograph at this early stage, this may have assisted in maintaining participant focus on pedagogy and curriculum, rather than biography.

5. Chapter Three Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used Vasilachis de Gialdino's 'Path of Epistemological Reflection' to describe and evaluate the methodology of this study. My methodological position is situated in an *relativist ontology* and *subjectivist epistemology* and this stance is reflected in my choice of research methods and approaches to analysis. The research comprises two parts; a case study that attempts to reconstruct the pedagogy and curriculum of the Motley Theatre Design Course, and a study of current design/scenography education. Both aspects are underpinned by narrative inquiry. However, methodological choices are not neutral because they

are also shaped by social and temporal dimensions. The research methods employed in this study arise from what Thomson calls the 'biographical era'; a consequence of the 'witnessing fever' of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[136] Therefore I recognise that my choice of research methods are shaped by this particular time and social context. The diagram below summarises the relationship between the research questions guiding this study, and the methods employed to address these research questions.

[136] Alistair Thomson, p. 59.

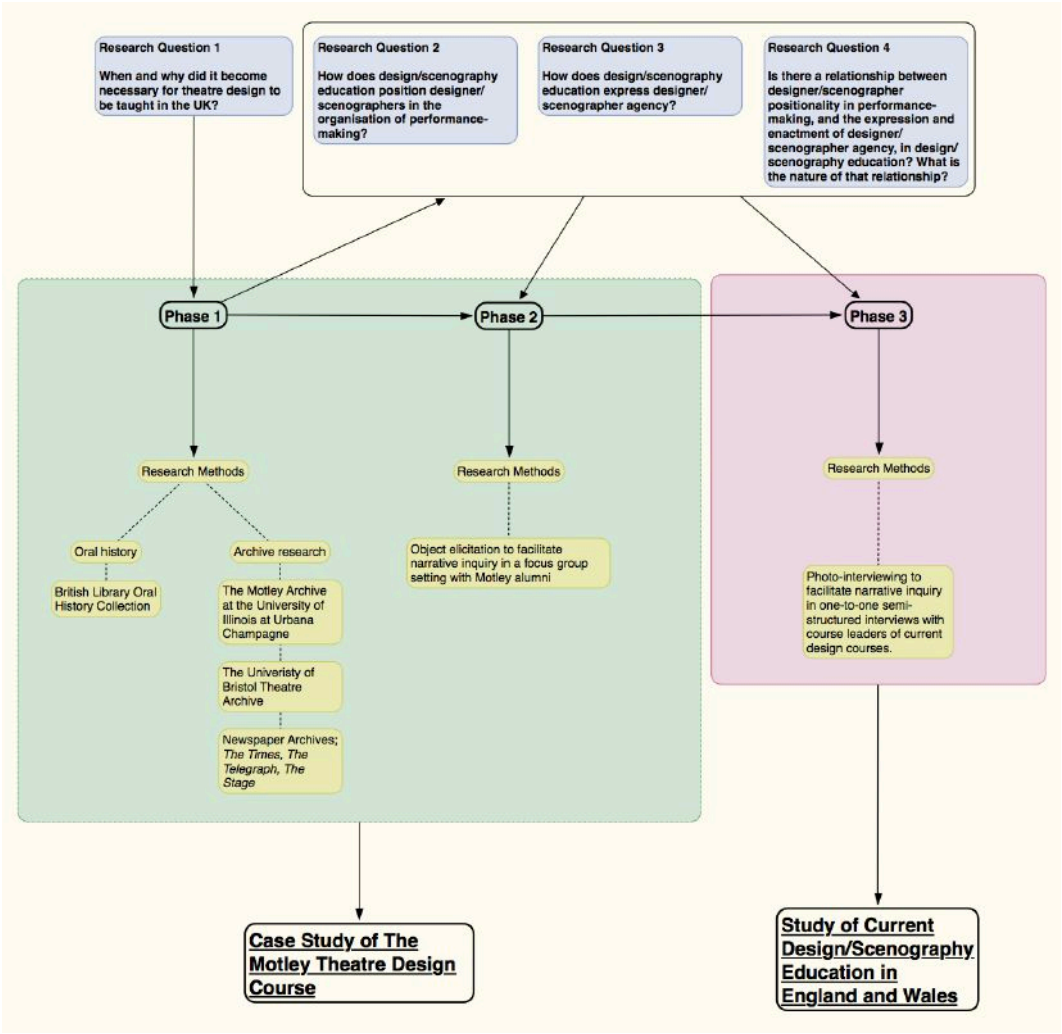

Figure iii: Diagrammatic Depiction of the Relationship Between Research Questions, Research Design and Research Methods

CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONALISING THE DESIGNER

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe and evaluate the social and cultural influences influencing the Motleys' ideas about design and define six Motley principles about design, that emerge from this. The Motley principles are:

- Education should be enmeshed with an extended professional network.
- Costumes should assist the movement of actors on stage.
- Settings should accommodate, and be built around, the movement of body in space.
- Designers should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources.
- Design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble.
- Designer and design should serve the play.

I argue that approaches to performance making that emerged through the London Theatre Studio (1936-1939), and that continued after World War II at the Old Vic Theatre School (1947-1951), reject a notion of the designer as decorator and reposition the designer as a creative collaborator. I show that professionalisation of the designer is bound up with education, expressed through the model of the combined company and school at the London Theatre Studio.

In chapter one, I problematised terminology associated with design/scenography, choosing to conflate the terms design/scenography, rather than define terms. However, in this chapter I will use the terms theatre design, and

designer. There are two reasons for this choice. First, this is the title of the Motley course, and the terms chosen by Margaret Harris, the course director. Second, the Motley course conceptualises the theatre designer through relations with the play text, as I shall show through this chapter.

2. The Motley Theatre Design Course: Emergence and Influences

The name Motley represents three female theatre designers; Margaret 'Percy' Harris, her sister Sophie Harris, and Elizabeth Montgomery. Harris explains that, in the 1920s, she and Sophie attended two art schools; the Queen Anne Studios,[1] run by Miss Lettice McMunn and the Chelsea Illustrators, founded by Muriel Goulden.[2] Harris says that Montgomery also attended both schools and this is how the Harris' and Montgomery became friends.[3]

[1] The term 'Queen Anne Studios' is generic term, used to describe art school buildings created in the Queen Anne Style, in rural locations, such as Kensington and Chelsea between 1850 to 1914. See: Kate Orme, 'Artists' Studios: Supplementary Planning Guidance' (London: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 2014), pp. 1–8 <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/wamdocs/SPG - artists studios.pdf> [accessed 23 August 2018].
[2] 'Goulden, Muriel Olive Cecile', *Suffolk Artists*, 2018 <https://suffolkartists.co.uk/index.cgi?choice=painter&pid=3687> [accessed 6 August 2018].
[3] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 30th January 1992.

Figure iv: Portrait of the Motleys by Howard Coster.

Image reproduced with permission from the National Portrait Gallery of Britain.

The friends attended performances at The Lyric, Hammersmith and The Old Vic theatres and Harris says that one of their early influences was the production of *The Beggar's Opera* at the Lyric in 1920,[4] designed by Claud Lovat Fraser.[5] Fraser had a brief career as theatre designer, between 1916 and his death in 1921. Thomas notes that Fraser's style comprises of 'vibrant colour, stylised costumes of the period and simple, suggestive scenic design'.[6] A reviewer in *The Times* describes Fraser's design for the *Beggar's Opera* as 'Hogarthian' because it rejects historical realism and embraces 'austere simplicity'.[7] Fraser says he aspired to a 'symbolic' scene that 'hints' at the eighteenth century in a set that is 'neat', 'unobtrusive', and 'simple' and represents many locations.[8] Fraser's wife, Grace Fraser, provides further explanation for his simple approach, explaining that this was a practical solution to an 'urgent crisis' caused by a lack of finance for the production.[9] There are aspects of Fraser's style that are similar to the Motley design style which Harris calls 'poetic realism',[10] that I will describe later in this chapter.

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[4] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 30th January 1992.
[5] John Gay and Johann Christoph Pepusch, *The Beggar's Opera* dir. by Nigel Playfair (London: The Lyric Theatre, 1920)
[6] Lindsey Catherine Thomas, 'Shakepeare Productions in England 1909 - 1932 and the Visual Arts: The Work of Ricketts, Wilkinson, Lovat Fraser and Shelving' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Birmingham, 2009), p. 240.
[7] A.B.W, The Beggar's Opera (review of 'The Beggar's Opera' (The Hammersmith, London) by John Gay), (London: The Times, 10 November 1920).
[8] John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera to Which Is Prefixed the Musick to Each Song*, ed. by Claud Lovat Fraser (London: William Heinemann, 1921).
[9] Grace Lovat Fraser, 'Claud Lovat Fraser: A Picture Book Issued on the Occaision of the Exhibition Claud Lovat Fraser, Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum 11 September - 28th December 1969' (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1969), p. 17.
[10] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.

Figure v: Scene Drawing from *The Beggar's Opera*, 'A Tavern near Newgate', by Claud Lovat Fraser

Image reproduced with permission from Bridgeman Images.

Figure vi: Set Design for *The Beggar's Opera* by Claud Lovat Fraser.

Image reproduced with permission from Bridgeman Images.

3. When Motley Met Gielgud

The Motleys produced some drawings on 'old lampshade paper',[11] of John Gielgud in the 1929 and 1930 Old Vic Theatre seasons in the roles of Richard II, Macbeth and King Lear, which he later bought from them.[12] Harris explains that they asked Gielgud if he would loan them the designs he had purchased, so that they could exhibit them at the Women's Exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Hall in 1928 in Vincent Square,[13] and he agreed. The stall next to Motley's stall, Harris explains, was run by Constance Spry, whose manager was John Perry. Perry was living with Gielgud at the time and so Gielgud visited the exhibition. Seeing Motley's design work, he invited them to create two costume designs[14] for *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Old Vic in 1931;[15] 'a domino mask for Gielgud and a dress for Dorothy Green'.[16] Gielgud wore the Benedick costume that the Motleys had designed for him to wear at the Old Vic's annual fancy dress ball.[17]

In 1930, the Harris' and Montgomery chose the name Motley to represent their collective efforts. Harris describes her talent as set design and model making, Sophie's skill was costume design and Montgomery was the painter of the group.[18] Strachan suggests that the name is inspired by a reference to 'Motley's the only wear' in *As You Like It,*[19] associated with the character of Touchstone the 'motley

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[11] John Gielgud, John Miller, and John Powell, *An Actor and His Time* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1979), p. 142.
[12] John Gielgud, *Early Stages* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1939), p. 211.
[13] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 30th January 1992.
[14] Mullin, p. 27.
[15] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, dir. by Harcourt Williams (London: Old Vic Theatre, 1931).
[16] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 30th January 1992.
[17] Jonathan Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life* (London: Methuen, 2001), p. 142.
[18] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.
[19] Alan Strachan, 'Motley', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–6 (p. 2).

fool'. Harris explains that the name was disliked by Gielgud:

> He hated it. He said, "So arty! Couldn't I just say it was designed by Elizabeth Montgomery?" he used to say. And we used to say "No". He finally accepted it, but he didn't think it was a good idea. And in a way, I suppose it was so anonymous, because people didn't know what Motley was, and I think that until recently, we didn't get very much recognition as designers. [20]

Harris emphasises that recognition was not important to them because they 'just wanted to do the work [and] were very unambitious'.[21]

Jump[22] and Mullin[23] suggest that the Motleys had done some design work, prior to meeting Gielgud, including costumes for *The Nativity Play,* at St. Martin in the Fields in 1927, directed by Tom Harrison.[24] Montgomery designed costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge in 1928 and Motley produced some design work for Charles B. Cochran's revues in 1930.[25] However, it was their association with Gielgud that exposed them to a wider theatrical network, as Harris explains:

> I think it was a sort of renaissance in the English theatre, led by John, and he was always looking for people who had the same sort of views as he had himself, I think, and collected them round him, because he was the instigator of all that linking- up.[26]

In the introduction to *A Theatrical Life,* Croall explains Gielgud's familial theatrical connections in some detail. Noting that Gielgud's mother, Kate Terry was

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[20] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 30th January 1992.
[21] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 30th January 1992.
[22] Sophie Jump, 'The Convergence of Influences on an Evolving Praxis of Mid-Twentieth Century British Theatre Design (1935-1965) Through a Close Study of Selected Works by Motley and Jocelyn Herbert' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the Arts, London., 2015), p. 58.
[23] Mullin, p. 216.
[24] A report in the *Picture Post* from 1938 includes photographs of costumes designed by Motley in a Christmas production directed by Tom Harrison. The photographs appear to depict the costumes described by Jump, see: Unknown, A Christmas Play in St. Martins (review of 'A Christmas Play' (St. Martin-in-the-fields, London) by Tom Harrison), (London, Picture Post, 24 December 1938), pp. 32-33.
[25] Mullin, p. 216.
[26] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.

the niece of Ellen Terry.[27] Gielgud was also second cousin to the designer Edward Gordon Craig. However, Croall notes that Gielgud rarely saw Craig because Craig left the UK in 1904 to live in Germany.

Gielgud performed in West End productions, for example, understudying Noel Coward in *The Vortex* in 1925, as well as playing an active role in Sunday Societies, or Sunday Clubs. These were small membership theatre clubs that provided opportunities for new writers and would present plays in protest at the censorship imposed by the 1843 Theatres Act, that granted the Lord Chamberlain the power to vet and censor plays.[28]

Croall says that Gielgud was 'torn between his desire to earn a big salary […] and his interest in the classics'.[29] It seems Gielgud was as comfortable with 'The Bright Young Things', a social group that emerged between the wars, as he was with the new 'serious' theatre makers involved in the Sunday Societies. Howard describes the 1930s as 'the Gielgud decade'.[30] For the Motleys, Gielgud's professional and social connections placed them at the centre of the theatre scene in London and led to their first credit as designers.

Motley's first programme credit was in 1932 for costume designs for *Romeo and Juliet*[31] at the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS).[32] This is where the Motleys met George Devine,[33] president of the OUDS.[34] Devine later became

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[27] Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life*, p. 3.
[28] Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life*, pp. 62–65.
[29] Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life*, p. 75.
[30] Tony Howard, 'Blood on the Bright Young Things: Shakespeare in the 1930's', in *British Theatre between the Wars, 1918 - 1939*, ed. by Clive Barker and Maggie Gale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 135–61 (p. 140).
[31] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 30th January 1992.
[32] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, dir. John Gielgud (London: New Theatre, 1932).
[33] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 30th January 1992.
[34] Sheridan Morley, *John Gielgid: The Authorised Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), pp. 102–3.

Motley's business manager, from 1933-1936 and Sophie's husband in 1939.[35] It was Gielgud who convinced Devine to employ Motley to do the costume designs for *Romeo and Juliet*.[36] This went against OUDS tradition, suggests Harris, because only OUDS members could be involved in productions.[37] The set for this production was designed by Molly McArthur,[38] who designed a composite or 'simultaneous setting', defined by Postlewait as:

> [A] representational stage setting of two or more fixed locales that are identifiable without dialogue and visible to the audience throughout the performance (or at least throughout a scene or act). Although lighting procedures on the modern stage may highlight or obscure different parts of the set at different times, the basic set remains on stage unchanged and definable.[39]

A reviewer in *The Times* comments on the simultaneous setting:

> A triple-arched setting by Miss Molly McArthur provides at once a pleasant frame to the action and an opportunity for swift progress from scene to scene […] The impression given of the whole production, in spite of one accidental delay of the first night, is never of a play being dragged or driven across the stage but of natural urgency and eagerness.[40]

Later in this chapter, I analyse Motley's use of a simultaneous setting in the 1946 production of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Piccadilly Theatre.[41]

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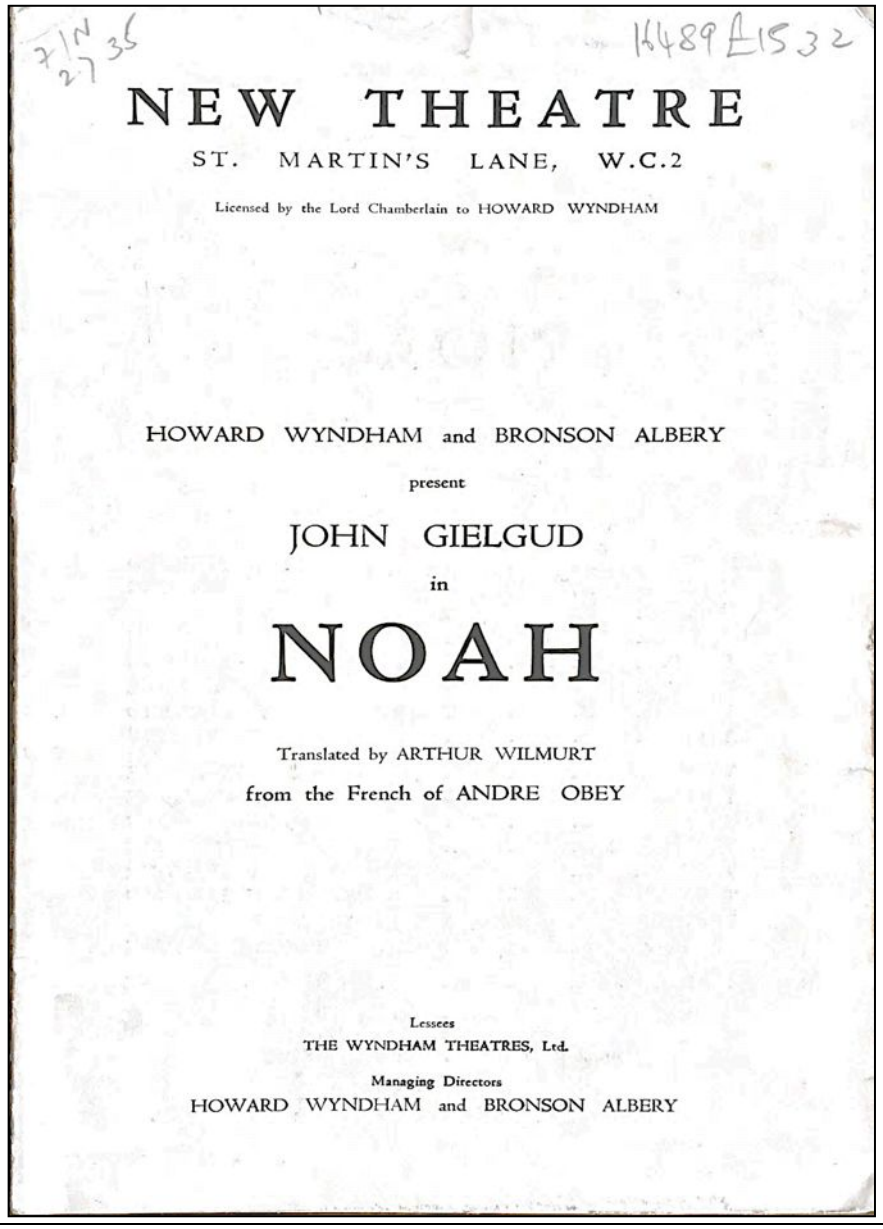
[35] Strachan, 'Motley', p. 3.
[36] Morley, p. 105.
[37] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 18th February 1992.
[38] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 30th January 1992.
[39] Thomas Postlewait, 'Simultaneity in Modern Stage Design and Drama', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 3.1 (1988), 5–30 (p. 7).
[40] Unknown, *O.U.D.S. "Romeo and Juliet"* By William Shakespeare (review of Romeo and Juliet (New Theatre, London) by John Gielgud), (London: The Times, 11 February 1932).
[41] William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* dir. by Glen Byam-Shaw (London: Piccadilly Theatre, 1946).

4. *Noah* and The London Theatre Studio

Gielgud recalls seeing Michel Saint-Denis' Paris-based Compagnie des Quinze (1929-1934)[42] in 1931 with their production of *Noé* by the Company's resident dramatist Andre Obey[43] at the Ambassador's Theatre in London. A few years later, Saint-Denis settled in Britain. Baldwin suggests that Saint-Denis moved to Britain from France in 1934 because of 'constant touring, insufficient funds, and defections by the actors' under his directorship.[44] This prompted Gielgud to seek a collaboration with Saint-Denis on an English translation of *Noah,* performed at the New Theatre, London, in 1935.[45] Saint-Denis directed the production and Gielgud was in the title role. The actor, Marius Goring, introduced Saint-Denis to Devine,[46] and Devine played the parts of 'The Bear' and 'The Man'. Motley were invited to design the scenery and costumes for the production.

[42] Gielgud, Miller, and Powell, p. 103.
[43] André Obey, *Noé*, dir. Michel Saint-Denis (London: Ambassador's Theatre, 1930-1931).
[44] Jane Baldwin, 'Michel Saint-Denis: Training the Complete Actor', in *Actor Training*, ed. by Alison Hodge, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 81–98 (p. 86).
[45] Andrey Obey (trans Arthur Milmurt), *Noah*, dir. Michel Saint-Denis (London: New Theatre, 1935).
[46] John Britton, 'Defining Ensemble', in *Encountering Ensemble*, ed. by John Britton (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013), pp. 90–100 (p. 95).



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NEW THEATRE

ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to HOWARD WYNDHAM

HOWARD WYNDHAM and BRONSON ALBERY

present

JOHN GIELGUD

in

NOAH

Translated by ARTHUR WILMURT

from the French of ANDRE OBEY

Lessees

THE WYNDHAM THEATRES, Ltd.

Managing Directors

HOWARD WYNDHAM and BRONSON ALBERY

TUESDAY, JULY 2nd, 1935

HOWARD WYNDHAM and BRONSON ALBERY

present

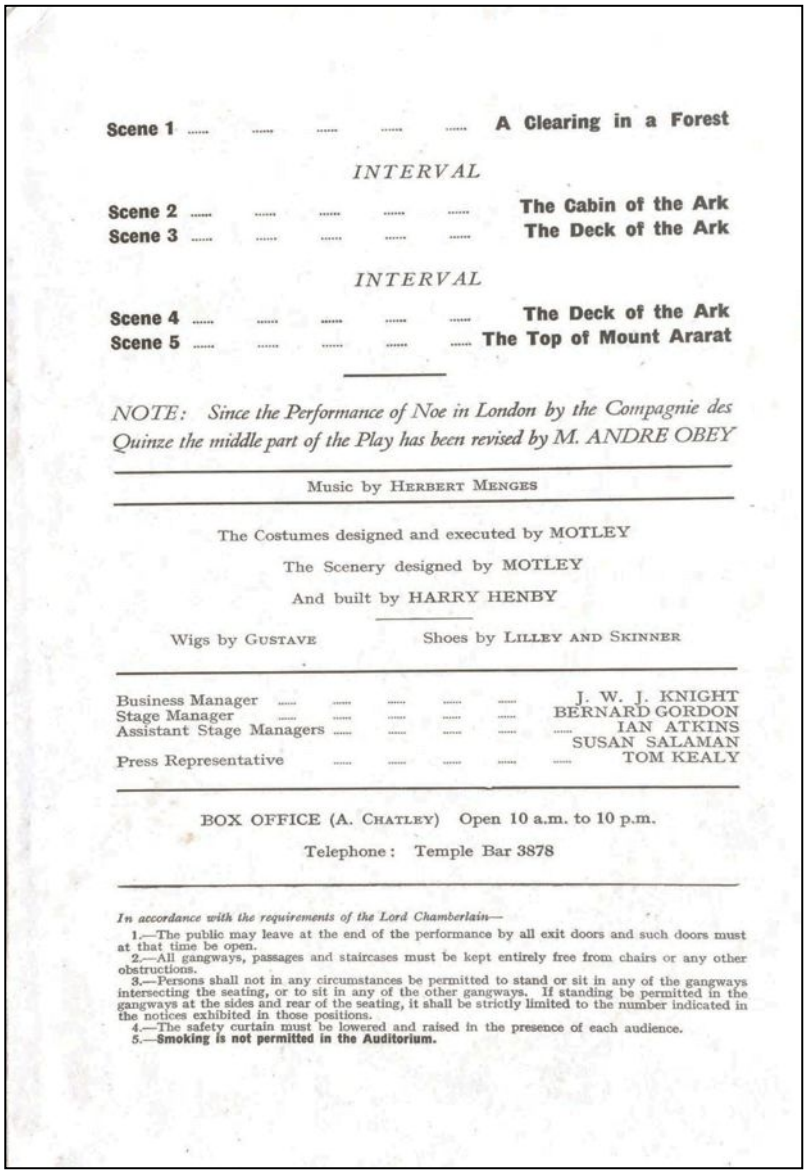
NOAH

Translated by ARTHUR WILMURT
from the French of ANDRE OBEY

Characters :

Noah	JOHN GIELGUD
Mrs. Noah	MARJORIE FIELDING
Shem	HAROLD YOUNG
Ham	COLIN KEITH-JOHNSTON
Japheth	MARIUS GORING
Naomi	ENA BURRILL
Sella	CICELY HOWLAND
Ada	JESSICA TANDY
The Bear	GEORGE DEVINE
The Lion	HARRY ANDREWS
The Monkey	ERIC WYNN-OWEN
The Elephant	RICHARD SHERIDAN
The Cow	BARBARA SEYMOUR
The Lamb	SUSAN SALAMAN
The Wolf	ALEC GUINNESS
The Tiger	MERULA SALAMAN
The Man	GEORGE DEVINE

The Play Produced by MICHEL SAINT-DENIS



Scene 1 ..... A Clearing in a Forest

INTERVAL

Scene 2 ..... The Cabin of the Ark
Scene 3 ..... The Deck of the Ark

INTERVAL

Scene 4 ..... The Deck of the Ark
Scene 5 ..... The Top of Mount Ararat

NOTE: Since the Performance of Noe in London by the Compagnie des Quinze the middle part of the Play has been revised by M. ANDRE OBEY

Music by HERBERT MENGES

The Costumes designed and executed by MOTLEY

The Scenery designed by MOTLEY

And built by HARRY HENBY

Wigs by GUSTAVE Shoes by LILLEY AND SKINNER

Business Manager ..... J. W. J. KNIGHT
Stage Manager ..... BERNARD GORDON
Assistant Stage Managers ..... IAN ATKINS
SUSAN SALAMAN
Press Representative ..... TOM KEALY

BOX OFFICE (A. CHATLEY) Open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Telephone: Temple Bar 3878

In accordance with the requirements of the Lord Chamberlain—

1.—The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exit doors and such doors must at that time be open.
2.—All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions.
3.—Persons shall not in any circumstances be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be strictly limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.
4.—The safety curtain must be lowered and raised in the presence of each audience.
5.—**Smoking is not permitted in the Auditorium.**

Figure vii: Programme of the Production of *Noah*.

From personal collection.

Obey's *Noah* tells the biblical story of God's instructions to Noah to build an ark, to preserve all life from a flood caused by God, ready to repopulate the earth once the flood subsides. Opinions about the production were mixed. A review in *The Times* notes that 'It approaches a great subject with directness and a rare, blessed humility […] it is still, and in spite of its defects not clap-trap but a work of art'. The review further praises the 'abundant vigour in the young men and the young women' and Gielgud's performance in particular. However, the reviewer has reservations about Obey's play, suggesting that 'the humour […] has an air of inviting you to laugh at it'.[47] A reviewer in *Play Pictorial* praises the costumes designed by Motley, quoting a line from *A Midsummer Night's Dream:* 'One felt the lion could '"roar you gently as any sucking dove", and the feline suppleness of the tiger was a joy to look upon'.[48] Harris says that Gielgud was unhappy in the role of Noah because he and Saint-Denis had quite different temperaments[49] but Gielgud recalls that he learned 'more about acting' from *Noah* and, later in Saint-Denis' *Three Sisters,* 'than from others in which I made a great personal success'.[50]

Harris explains that, during this period, Gielgud associated with those who were interested in 'sincere theatre':

> [T]here must have been quite a group of people who were influenced by the way things were in the world and were reacting against a certain superficiality which was around at the time, with all the sort of Coward set-up, which John was involved in too, but he opted out of that for what he believed to be more sincere.[51]

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[47] Unknown, *New Theatre*, (review of 'Noah' (The New Theatre, London) by Michel Saint-Denis), (*The Times*, 3 July 1935).
[48] Unknown, *Noah: Translated by Arthur Wilmurt from the French of Andre Obey* (review of 'Noah' (The New Theatre, London), (*Play Pictorial,* 3rd July 1935).
[49] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.
[50] John Gielgud, *Backward Glances* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 158.
[51] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.

In a letter to Mrs. Patrick Campbell in October 1938, Gielgud laments not being able to work with Saint-Denis on a project because of his own performance commitments in the West End, saying 'I can't help wishing a little that I was there too, but I suppose filthy lucre and a big commercial success are not to be despised'.[52] Miller and Powell suggest that Gielgud, along with contemporaries Laurence Olivier and Peggy Ashcroft, provided a generational bridge in the theatre between what they define as commercial theatre and 'sincere' theatre.[53] I will return to this distinction later in this chapter.

The Motley studio off Garrick Yard, at the rear of St. Martin's Lane in London, became what Strachan calls 'a kind of informal club for adventurous young London theatrical talent'.[54] The studio was previously the site of the 'Kind Dragon Club', a social club for actors in the 1920s and previously the site of Chippendale's studio.[55] Wardle suggests that those who frequented the Motley studio[56] comprised 'the rising theatrical establishment' in English theatre.[57]

Saint-Denis says he was introduced to Devine and Glen Byam-Shaw at the Motley's studio by Goring, and that they worked alongside him to develop the plans for what was to become, in 1936, the London Theatre Studio.[58] Motleys' social and professional connections led to them being asked to lead the design course.

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[52] *Gielgud's Letters: John Gielgud in His Own Words*, ed. by Richard Mangan (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), p. 51.
[53] Gielgud, Miller, and Powell, p. 109.
[54] Strachan, 'Motley', p. 2.
[55] Michael Sanderson, *From Irving to Olivier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 200.
[56] Mullin, p. 38. Mullin concludes that the group included Peggy Ashcroft, Anthony Quayle, Edith Evans, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Jack Hawkins, Jessica Tandy, Robert Donat, the Redgraves, the Byam-Shaws, Michel Saint-Denis, Alec and Merula Guinness and Stephen Haggard.
[57] Irving Wardle, *The Theatres of George Divine* (London: Methuen, 1978), p. 39.
[58] Michel Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises* (London: Heinneman Educational Books Ltd, 1982), p. 43.
Note: Baldwin's account suggests that Marius Goring, rather than Byam-Shaw had spent six months alongside Devine and Saint-Denis devising the plans for the London Theatre Studio. In Baldwin, p. 86.

5. Providence Hall, Islington: The London Theatre Studio

Harris recalls that the idea for the London Theatre Studio emerged at the same time as the production of *Noah.*[59] In October 1935, *The Times* announces Gielgud and Guthrie's involvement in the London Theatre Studio, with Gielgud teaching students 'how to speak verse', and Guthrie lecturing on 'production'.[60] Saint-Denis, writing in 1960, explains that Guthrie was the principal backer,[61] but later credits Guthrie alongside Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Goring, Bronson Albery, Ian E Black, Laura Dyas, Vera and Basil Burton, and Charles Laughton.[62]

The London Theatre Studio opened in 1936 in a single room in Beak Street, London. Later that year, it moved briefly to a rehearsal room at the Old Vic Theatre.[63] Then, in October 1936, teaching began in permanent premises opened in a Methodist chapel at Providence Hall, Islington,[64] with the interior and offices designed by the Bauhaus teacher, Marcel Breuer.[65]

Harris explains that Saint-Denis was the Director of the Studio, with Devine as Assistant Director,[66] and later the Managing Director of the company.[67] Harris notes that staff who taught at the London Theatre Studio, also taught at the Old Vic Theatre School after the First World War. Harris believes that Janis Strasse, led singing and music workshops at the Studio. Geraldine Orford taught voice and Litz Pisk taught movement and dance. Other staff Harris recalls include Mamie Watson

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[59] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 15th March 1992.
[60] Unknown, 'The Theatres', *The Times*, 31 October 1935, p. 12.
[61] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 44.
[62] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 43.
[63] Thomas Cornford, 'The English Theatre Studios of Michael Chekhov and Michel Saint-Denis, 1935-1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2012), p. 165.
[64] Unknown, 'Theatres: London Theatre Studio', *The Times*, 25 June 1936, p. 14.
[65] Cornford, p. 52.
[66] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 4th March 1992.
[67] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 48.

and Suria Magito,[68] whom Cornford says taught movement and mask,[69] and later married Saint-Denis.[70]

[68] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 4th March 1992.
[69] Cornford, p. 163.
[70] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 48.

Figure viii: Providence Hall, Islington. 2018 (Own photograph).

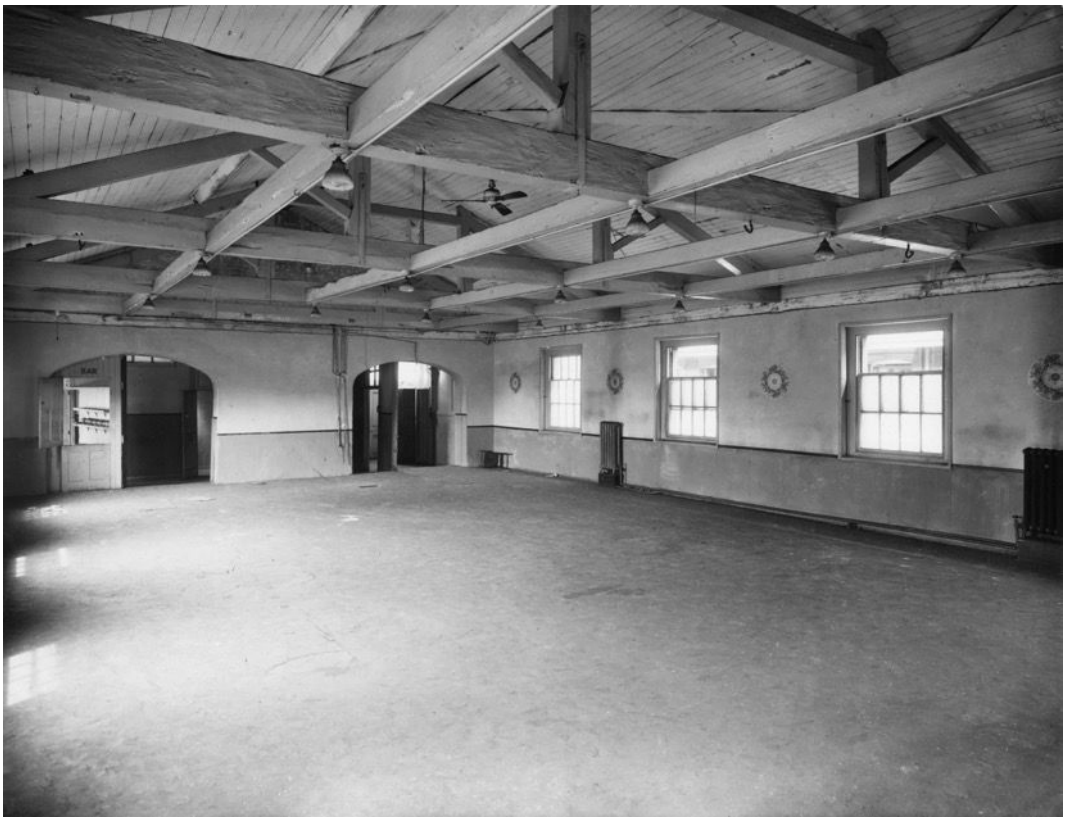

Figure ix: Providence Hall, Islington. The chapel before conversion to the London Theatre Studio, 1936.

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Figure x: The Auditorium and Proscenium of the London Theatre Studio, designed by Marcel Breuer, 1937.

Image reproduced with permission of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

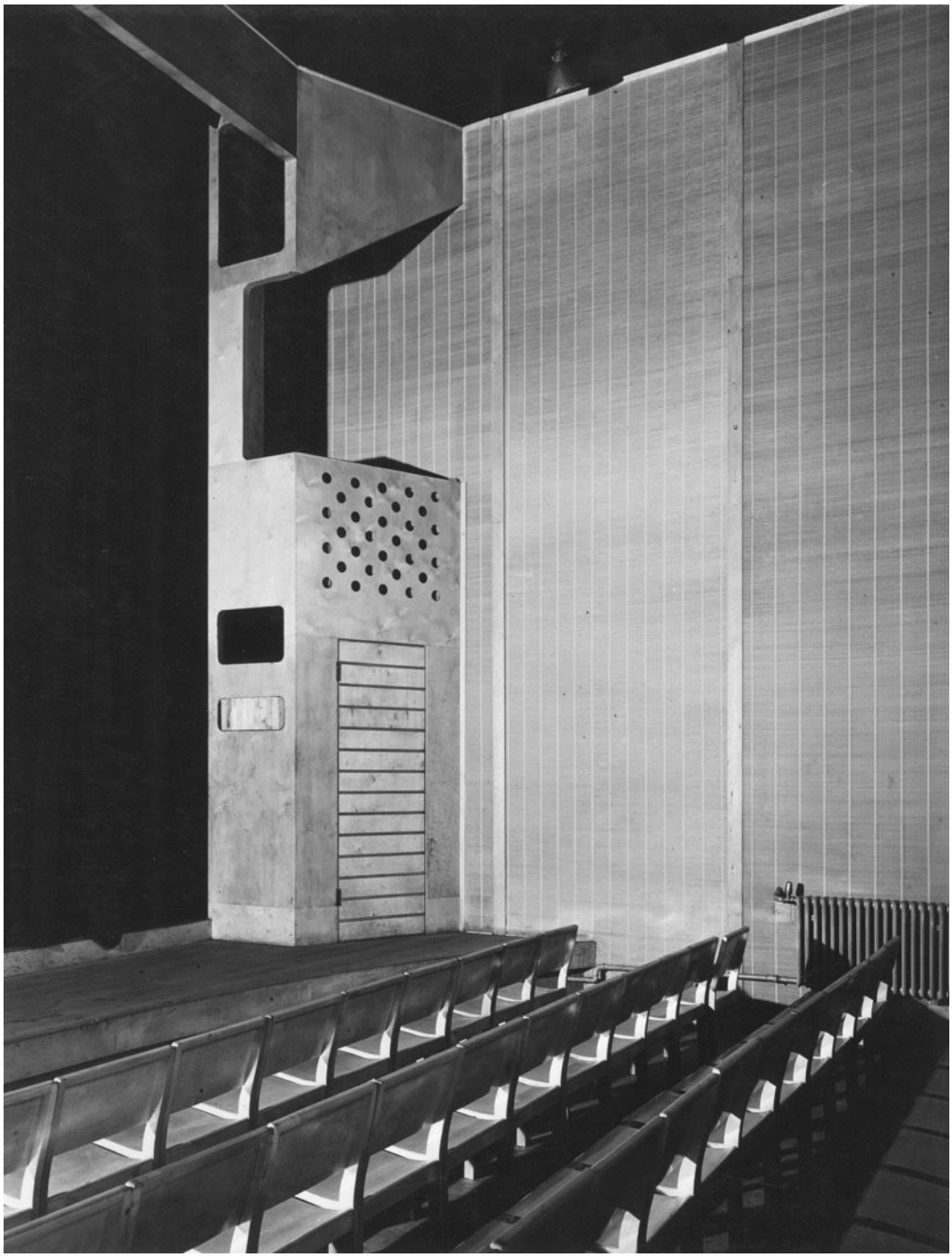

Figure xi: The Front Stalls of the London Theatre Studio, designed by Marcel Breuer, 1937.

Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Figure xii: The Foot of the Proscenium of the London Theatre Studio, designed by Marcel Breuer, 1937.

Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

After World War II, Laurence Olivier, joint artistic director with Ralph Richardson and John Burrell, of the Old Vic Theatre, invited Saint-Denis to establish an institute of which the Old Vic School would be a part.[71] Byam-Shaw, Devine and Saint-Denis led the Old Vic Theatre Centre, with Harris leading the design course at the Old Vic School. The School was closed in 1952 by the Board of Governors.[72] Baldwin ascribes the closure to 'internecine feuding, rivalries, and conflicting ambitions among the administrators and Board members.[73] After the closure, Byam-Shaw became artistic director at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and then at Sadler's Wells Theatre.[74] Devine founded the Royal Court Theatre and the English Stage Company and Saint-Denis founded theatre schools in Colmar, then Strasbourg.

6. The Manifesto of the London Theatre Studio

Cornford notes that the programme for *Sowers of the Hills,* at the Westminster Theatre, includes an advertisement promoting the opening of the London Theatre Studio in January 1936. The advert presents the equivalent of a manifesto for the London Theatre Studio:

> A School of Acting, both for inexperienced students, and for actors and it will be the basis of:
>
> - A permanent Company, trained to act together, and therefore to give a more coordinated production than normal West-End conditions permit
>
> - Around this Company and School, and working with it will be specialists from every branch of the theatre, artists, musicians, authors etc.

[71] Baldwin, p. 89.
[72] Mullin, p. 206.
[73] Baldwin, p. 89.
[74] Unknown, 'Mr. Colin Graham On Wells Staff', *The Times*, 21 October 1966, p. 18.

> - It should be realised that the School will provide material for the Company and will therefore be in constant touch with the professional theatre. There will be training in every possible attribute that a real actor can need
>
> - This is a practical effort by a man of the working theatre to improve the material available for genuine theatre productions.[75]

In the next part of this chapter, I will show how these manifesto pledges were realised at the London Theatre Studio, and the impact of these on the design course in particular. I will then identify and define the Motley principles that emerge from this, that informed the pedagogy and curriculum of the Motley course.

6.1.1 'A School of Acting' in 'The Professional Theatre'

In this part of the chapter, I examine the London Theatre Studio's aim to create a school of acting, alongside the third manifesto commitment, to 'provide material for the Professional Theatre'. I will consider the influence of Jacques Copeau on Saint-Denis. I then explore similarities between the ideas of the Bauhaus and the London Theatre Studio. Finally, I show that the combined school and company at the London Theatre Studio is associated with a professionalising tendency in the theatre, that began in the period between the wars. I aim to show how these ideas contribute to the development of the curriculum and pedagogy at the London Theatre Studio and how, in turn, this shaped the first three of the Motley principles I have defined; namely:

- Education should be enmeshed with an extended professional network
- Costumes should assist the movement of actors on stage
- Settings should accommodate, and be built around, the movement of

[75] Cornford, p. 135.

body in space.

6.1.2 The Influence of Jacques Copeau

In the opening to Saint-Denis' *Training for the Theatre,* he explains that his plans for a combined school and company were influenced by the ideas of his uncle, Jaques Copeau. Copeau established the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier in 1913 in France. The company occupied a building on left bank of the Seine in Paris that was previously a variety hall called l'Athénée St-Germain. Copeau removed the gilded plaster work, and proscenium arch, reducing the theatre architecture to a simple performance and rehearsal space.[76] The concept of the bare stage, or 'mise à nu' is central to Copeau's philosophy of theatre.[77] In *Un Essaide Renovation Dramatique* of 1913, he says 'Pour l'oevre nouvelle, qu'on nous laisse un treteau neu' ('For the new work, give us an empty stage').[78] Copeau rejects decoration and embellishment, describing 'cumbersome machinery' and 'showy effects'[79] in scenic design. He also rejects what he calls 'cabotinage', which refers to actors adopting 'phoney emotions', or 'nineteenth-century tricks-of-the-trade'.[80]

Saint-Denis argues that the bare stage was an important starting point for the new theatre, because it discards what he calls the 'naturalistic illusion' of actors placed in pictorial compositions. These, he says, merge the actor into 'the

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[76] John Rudlin, 'Jacques Copeau: The Quest for Sincerity', in *Actor Training*, ed. by Alison Hodge, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 43–62 (p. 43).
[77] Rudlin, p. 43.
[78] Jacques Copeau, 'Un Essai de Rénovation Dramatique', 1913 <http://www.gallimard.fr/Footer/Ressources/Entretiens-et-documents/Document-Le-Vieux-Colombier-1913-1924/Un-essai-de-renovation-dramatique> [accessed 28 August 2018].
[79] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 39.
[80] Rudlin, p. 44.

atmosphere to the point of disappearance'.[81] Naturalism, he complains, gives 'the illusion that illusion has disappeared'.[82] In contrast, the empty stage exposes the actor, drawing attention to his 'three dimensional' presence. Saint-Denis says that this makes 'the encumbrances' of actors, apparent. He describes the tendency of actors of the 1920s to '[elaborate] the texts so as to adorn themselves with words, to show off the beauty of the text as well as their own virtuosity, preening and strutting about like peacocks, but in borrowed plumage'.[83] For Saint-Denis, the bare stage better serves his twin concerns of realism and 'truth':

> There was no "lying"; theatrical truth, the *physical* truth of the theatre, was thus represented in accord with the psychological truth of life. Although knowing we were at the theatre, we had no impression of being there: artifice had been eliminated.[84]

I will return to the rejection of decoration when I examine the Motley aesthetic style of poetic realism that emerges from this philosophy, later in this chapter.

Therefore, Copeau seeks to purge the actor and the stage of any decorative affectation or 'plumage'. In this way, Rudlin suggests, Copeau was an untypical modernist; he did not believe in 'isms', but in the 'renewable, rediscoverable entity' of theatre.[85] Copeau aimed for 'perfect unity' in the theatre through the unification of the creator/dramatist with the process of realisation.[86] This was to be achieved by establishing a school for everyone involved in performance making, including

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[81] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 28.
[82] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 59.
[83] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 32.
[84] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 30.
[85] Rudlin, pp. 43–44.
[86] Jacques Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, ed. by John Rudlin and Norman H Paul (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 125.

'theatre artists'; dancers, musicians, mimes, stage managers, scene-painters, costume designers, carpenters, stage hands.[87] The idea that connects the London Theatre Studio and the Old Vic Theatre School, is that of an integrated school and theatre company. Saint-Denis stresses the importance of the 'basic unity between the intellectual movement and the development of the theatre'.[88] He suggests that 'experimentation' in theatre may only be possible in the context of 'a good and daring school'.[89] Copeau saw education and theatre as interchangeable and interdependent: 'The idea of the school and theatre are one and the same'.[90] Copeau believed the school as 'laboratory' was the means by which 'a new kind of actor, an instrument of a new revitalised dramaturgy, could be evolved'.[91] At the London Theatre Studio, the aim was to recruit young actors, untainted by actorly habits, who would go on to form a company.[92] The preoccupation with applied decoration, whether in scenic design or acting, reflects a general preoccupation with the unification of art and craft during this period. Some of the Bauhaus émigrés in 1930s London were in the same social circles as members of the London Theatre Studio. Therefore, in the next part of this chapter, I will briefly explain the history and philosophy of the Bauhaus.

6.1.3 The Influence of the Bauhaus

Marcel Breuer, one of the Bauhaus teachers, designed the interior of the London Theatre Studio building at Providence Place, Islington. Breuer, along with

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[87] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 10.
[88] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 31.
[89] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 108.
[90] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 28.
[91] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, pp. 31–32.
[92] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 45.

other Bauhaus émigrés, moved to London to escape persecution in Germany in the 1930s. Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus School, arrived in Britain in 1934, and László Moholy-Nagy in 1935.[93] They lived in the newly constructed Lawn Road Flats, designed by Wells Coates, which, according to Allinson, became 'a gathering point for the Hampstead Avant-Garde'.[94]

[93] Marion F. Deshmukh, 'The Visual Arts and Cultural Migration in the 1930s and 1940s: A Literature Review', *Central European History*, 41.4 (2008), 569–604 (p. 592).
[94] Ken Allinson, *Architects and the Architecture of London* (London: Elsevier Ltd., 2008), pp. 318–19.

Figure xiii: The Lawn Road Flats Hampstead.

The Lawn Road Flats were a modernist experiment in communal living, with shared common spaces like the Isobar Club, which Breuer designed in 1937.[95] Harris explains that she knew Breuer well. For example, they had holidayed at Emlyn Williams' cottage on the Thames, and Breuer had designed the interior of the Motley's Modern Dress Company shop.[96] Gropius had intended to re-establish the Bauhaus in London, but instability in Europe prompted him to leave for the United States in 1937.[97]

The Bauhaus, or 'building house', was a school of design that emerged from a merger of the Grand Ducal Saxon Academy for Pictorial Art and the Grand Ducal Saxon Academy for Arts and Crafts in 1919, in Weimar, Germany.[98] Pevsner suggests that the ability to mass-produce designed goods was a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, but this contributed to a separation of artist from production.[99] This separation was reflected in these two institutions. Manufacturers would buy artists' designs which were then rendered by technicians for mass production. The technicians rendering the designs were disassociated from the designs they were producing, and the designs themselves were 'dependent on the styles of the past' taught in the academies in the 'French official tradition',[100] that trained artists for the royal manufactures of decorative items destined for the homes

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[95] Ian Grosvenor, '"The Art of Seeing": Promoting Design in Education in 1930s England', *Paedagogica Historica*, 41.4–5 (2005), 507–34 (p. 521).
[96] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 15th March 1992.
[97] Deshmukh, p. 592.
[98] Walter Gropius, 'The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus', in *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, ed. by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, 3rd edn (Boston: Charles T. Branford Company, 1959), pp. 20–29 (p. 22).
[99] Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, 3rd edn (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 45.
[100] Alexander Dorner, 'The Background of the Bauhaus', in *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, ed. by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, 3rd edn (Boston: Charles T. Branford Company, 1959), pp. 9–14 (p. 10).

of the aristocracy. An outcome of this separation, Periton suggests, was that the objects embodied an aesthetic and stylistic separation, with manufacturers 'stick[ing] unrelated frills on the existing forms of trade and industrial products'.[101]

In 1919, Gropius secured approval to rename the newly formed school, the 'Bauhaus' or building house. This term represented Gropius' wish to create 'a happy working community' once characteristic of the 'Medieval Bauhütten',[102] that emphasised 'unification of all training in art and design', in pursuance of 'the collective work of art',[103] symbolised by the notion of the building. Architecture did not appear on the Bauhaus curriculum until after the move to a new building in Dessau.[104] Instead, the 'new architectonic' of the Bauhaus project was concerned with communal values and collaboration represented in the *notion* of a shared building.[105] Gropius sought to reconcile art with craft, the 'artist-workman'[106] with the machine, and industry with artistry.

The ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement in England influenced the development of the Bauhaus. For example, William Morris' ideas were enthusiastically promoted in Germany by Hermann Muthesius, attaché to the German Embassy in London. Between 1896 - 1903 Muthesius was tasked with researching English Housing, publishing *Das Englishche Haus* in 1905.[107] Muthesius was associated with 'neu sachlichkeit' or 'new objectivity' [108] which

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[101] Diana Periton, 'The Bauhaus as Cultural Paradigm', *The Journal of Architecture*, 1.3 (1996), 189–205 (p. 190).
[102] Periton, p. 191.
[103] Gropius, p. 22.
[104] Periton, p. 194.
[105] Grosvenor, p. 520.
[106] Lauren S Weingarden, 'Aesthetics Politicized: William Morris to the Bauhaus', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 38.3 (1985), 8–13 (p. 10).
[107] Pevsner, p. 32.
[108] Juliet Koss, 'Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls', *The Art Bulletin*, 85.4 (2003), 724–45 (p. 730).

privileged utility over decoration. He established the *Deutches Werkbund* in 1907, with Gropius being one of the youngest teachers recruited to the enterprise.[109] Similarly, Josef Hoffman founded the *Wiener Werkstatten* in Vienna in 1903 with the aim of producing 'quality household goods in the English tradition'.[110] In Hellerau, Karl Schmidt's *Lehrwerkstätte und Fachschule* (training workshop and school) founded in 1910, included a theatre, and provided a home for the experiments of the stage designer Adolphe Appia, and composer and musician Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, founder of Eurthymics, and an influence on Copeau.[111]

Naylor suggests that these enterprises used the context of education to unify art and craft. Furthermore, they aimed to 'destroy the barriers between the teachers and the taught', rejecting 'instruction', examinations and grading in favour of 'demonstrations and discussions'.[112] I return to the social constructivist features of learning, similar to those associated with the Bauhaus, in the analysis of Motley alumni experiences in chapter five. Cross argues that the Bauhaus has much in common with other educational reform movements of the early twentieth century, that emphasised 'total education' with non-prescriptive approaches to teaching and learning, tailored to the individual needs of the student, for example, the Montessori School and Helen Parkhurst's Dalton Laboratory Plan. The focus of these approaches was 'active participation in 'doing' rather than in passive listening', [113] the connection of theory with practice.

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[109] Weingarden, p. 13.
[110] Anita Cross, 'The Educational Background to the Bauhaus', *Design Studies*, 4.1 (1983), 43–52 (p. 47).
[111] Gillian Naylor, *The Bauhaus Reassessed: Sources and Design Theory* (London: Herbert, 1985), p. 239.
[112] Naylor, p. 29.
[113] Cross, pp. 43–48.

The London Theatre Studio concept of the integrated school and company represents Saint-Denis' belief that removing embellishment would return the theatre to an authentic state. He emphasises unification, achieved by closer alignment of theory/education and doing/practice and I have shown that there are similarities with the philosophy of the Bauhaus during this period. The notion of the combined company and school provides the means by which art and craft might be unified through experimentation, and practice. In the next part of the chapter, I examine how the design course emerges from a professionalising tendency in theatre between the wars.

6.1.4 Education and Professionalisation in the Theatre

Baldwin suggests that Saint-Denis sought to '[raise] the standards of the text-based professional theatre'.[114] The notion of raising standards anticipates Priestley's post-war vision of a new theatre:

> We want a Theatre that is […] a place where serious professional men and women, properly trained and well equipped, go to work, as surgeons and physicians go to work in a hospital.[115]

As I have remarked elsewhere in this thesis, education about, and training in, specialised forms of knowledge is central to the process of professionalisation; knowledge has a symbolic value;[116] it regulates entry to professions for which those skills and knowledge are deemed essential.[117] Harris credits Saint-Denis with being

[114] Baldwin, p. 88.
[115] Maggie Gale, *J.B.Priestley* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 44.
[116] Torstendahl, p. 3.
[117] Frame, p. 1027.

the first to develop 'professional training for […] designers'.[118] As Harris remarks, the purpose of the design course was to train designers in a particular approach so that:

> [They would] be more aware of their job being not to decorate but to design. Some of them had much more feeling for decoration but I think that what we hope is that they understand more how to interpret a play.

I will return to these themes of decoration, and the centrality of the play text in the Motley approach to education, later in this chapter.

Rebellato observes that the London Theatre Studio, and the Old Vic Theatre Centre were the first schools in Britain that attempted to consolidate the relationship between education and practice in the theatre.[119] Horton argues that the association of art with education is bound up with elitist notions of art, separating 'hoi aristoi' from the 'hoi polloi' by 'training and taste'. He argues that this distinction is maintained through a discourse that bemoans the 'commercial vulgarization of art',[120] a point I shall return to later in this chapter.

Professionalisation at the London Theatre Studio was reflected in new job titles. For example, Saint-Denis introduced 'artist-technician'[121] into the training vocabulary. It is worth noting the similarity between Saint-Denis' terminology and Gropius' notion of the 'artist-workman', that sought to disrupt boundaries 'between the fine arts and applied arts'.[122] Saint-Denis insists upon students 'exercising their

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[118] Cathy Courtney, *Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty*, 28th September 1993.
[119] Rebellato, p. 84.
[120] John Horton, 'The Re-Professionalization of the Theatre: Some Thoughts on Joining the Educational Establishment', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 21.4 (1969), 367–77 (p. 368).
[121] Wardle, p. 69.
[122] Weingarden, p. 10.

practical *and* artistic knowledge […] we want them to become professionals, who can command respect from workmen and artists alike'.[123] Harris expresses a similar aspiration:

> [I]n the old days the designer was more or less a technician under the guidance of the director but now […] the designer has become a contributing factor on his own […] still in collaboration with the director but much more creative. Much less just a technician.[124]

Saint-Denis goes further, suggesting that 'many productions are indirectly directed by designers'.[125] This suggests that designers had a degree of autonomy, which Fournier identifies as a feature of professionalisation.[126]

The London Theatre Studio adopted a model of apprenticeship training with students taught by professional actors and technicians. There is evidence here of Copeau's influence, who adopted this model at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier.[127] Copeau insisted upon recruiting 'competent collaborators' to teach. They were selected on the basis of their expertise, rather than 'drawing up a list of courses and then wondering which teacher is qualified for which course'.[128] The implication is that teachers would bring embodied expertise to their teaching. Similarly, the training at the London Theatre Studio sought to bring together professional actors with students.[129] It was not to be 'a school for a school's sake', but preparation for entry into the 'working theatre'.[130] The close proximity of education to professional

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[123] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 225.
[124] Margaret Harris, in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 28th September 1993.
[125] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 81.
[126] Valérie Fournier, 'The Appeal to "Professionalism" as a Disciplinary Mechanism', *Sociological Review*, 47.2 (1999), 280–307 (p. 282).
[127] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 26.
[128] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 39.
[129] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 47.
[130] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 45.

practice relates to the first Motley principle that I have identified, which is that *education should be enmeshed with an extended professional network*. I explore this principle in more detail in chapter five. In the next part, I will summarise the actor training at the London Theatre Studio, before examining the curriculum and pedagogy of the design course.

6.1.5 Actor Training at the London Theatre Studio

Saint-Denis' model of actor training was highly prescriptive, starting from the acquisition of physical and speech skills, before allowing actors to work on texts. Saint-Denis and Devine introduced masks, with Saint-Denis teaching tragic mask and Devine, character mask.[131] Saint-Denis explains that improvisation was at the heart of much of the training, because it provides 'a fundamental way to open up new and unexpected horizons for a new actor'.[132]

In *Training for the Theatre,* written in 1982, Saint-Denis' explains his system of actor training. The training is arranged over four years; The Discovery Year, The Transformation Year, The Interpretation Year and The Performing Year. Each year is separated into two phases; 'Technique', which is further segregated into 'Body', 'Voice/Diction' and 'Speech/Language'; and 'Imagination' which is separated into 'Improvisation', 'Interpretation' and 'Imagination/Background/Misc'.[133] The nature of actor training at the Studio is important because of how the physicality of the actor, and the body in space, influence the curriculum of the costume and set design course at the Studio.

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[131] Baldwin, p. 87.
[132] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 48.
[133] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, pp. 79–99.

Saint-Denis suggests that actor training is different from other kinds of 'professional training' because the training is 'the human being itself - the body and soul of the actor'.[134] Actor training at the London Theatre Studio would have been physically demanding. Acting students attended a wide variety of classes, including gymnastics, acrobatics, and movement.[135] Gielgud describes his experience of Saint-Denis' methods in the production of *Noah* in 1935, explaining that 'Physically it was a demanding part, involving a great deal of balancing on planks and climbing ladders'.[136] The aim of the training, suggests Sanderson, was to promote physical and emotional 'suppleness'.[137]

6.1.6 Design Education at the London Theatre Studio: Costume

The emphasis on physical movement meant that costume classes emphasised the need for costume to accommodate actors' physical movements. Harris recalls that Sophie Harris taught 'The Wearing of Costume class'.[138] In this class, actors learned about movement in costume and costume designers adapted what they could find for them to wear. The principle of costumes facilitating the movement of the body is a guiding principal for Motley. For example, for the 1934 *Hamlet* at the New Theatre, Motley created costumes made from light-weight materials to allow the actors freedom of movement, for example, using rubber door stops to

[134] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 79.
[135] Wardle, p. 59.
[136] Gielgud, Miller, and Powell, p. 103.
[137] Sanderson, p. 193.
[138] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.

construct Hamlet's chain.[139] Gielgud refers to the lightness of the chain, and how this contrasts with its heavy-looking appearance.[140]

Saint-Denis argues that the costume design process should incorporate three dimensions. For example, he suggests designers should initially construct costumes around small wire figures. Students then sketch the three-dimensional figure in two dimensions. He says that costume should be 'built around an actor's physique' and is embodied in the earliest stages of design.[141] Harris describes the costume designer's 'moment of truth' as being:

> How the clothes are put to practical use and the ultimate test - moved in, walked in, breathed in, acted in, their worth either proved or disproved by the animation which at best the designer can have only imagined.[142]

For this reason, Motley emphasise that costumes be 'strongly made', due to 'hard and constant wear'.[143] Saint-Denis similarly stresses the importance of 'strong seams', 'firmly sewn' and 'practical'.[144]

Harris gives an example of badly designed costumes in 'The Noguchi Lear'. This was the 1955 production of *King Lear* at Stratford Memorial Theatre,[145] designed by the sculptor Isamu Noguchi.[146] The costumes were very stiff and made of leather, felt and India rubber. Carl Bonn, the costume maker, recalls the dress rehearsal:

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[139] Margaret Harris, in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 1st March 1993.
[140] Gielgud, *Early Stages*, p. 258.
[141] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 228.
[142] Motley, *Designing and Making Stage Costumes* (London: Studio Vista, 1964), p. 13.
[143] Motley, *Designing and Making Stage Costumes*, p. 11.
[144] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 231.
[145] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, dir. by John Gielgud, (Stratford Upon Avon: Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company, Palace Theatre, London, and European tour, 1955).
[146] Alan S Downer, 'A Comparison of Two Stagings : Stratford-upon-Avon and London', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 6.4 (1955), 429–33 (p. 430).

> Come the dress rehearsal, they had a normal fight, falling on the floor, on top of these great leather, felt, stiffened things, which bent and buckled - Noguchi sat in the audience and roared with laughter […] I could have killed him.[147]

Harris comments that 'The costumes didn't really work because they were unmanageable […] They [actors] couldn't move in them'.[148] Harris recounts that Peggy Ashcroft objected to the costume, choosing to wear something else entirely. Although Harris has some reservations about Noguchi's design because they hindered the actor's movements, she also rejects Ashcroft's choice to choose her own costume, because this disrupts visual unity. The notion of unity is one that I have already touched upon in my discussion of the influence of the Bauhaus on the London Theatre Studio and will return to again later in this chapter when I examine Saint-Denis' idea of a unified company of ensembliers.

The emphasis on movement and physicality in actor training at the London Theatre Studio contributes towards the second Motley principle, *that costumes should assist the movement of actors on stage*. In the next part, I examine how the presence of the actor's body influenced approaches to set design.

6.1.7 Set Design at the London Theatre Studio

Harris recalls that there were three or four students on the design course at the London Theatre Studio, including Jocelyn Herbert, Charlotte Carte and Peggy Jennings. Harris explains that Saint-Denis designed the structure and content of the

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[147] Carl Bonn and Colin Mackenzie, *Interview with Carl Bonn and Colin Mackenzie: Costume Makers* (interviewed by Suzanne Adams for the Victoria and Albert Museum) (September, 1996) <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/i/costume-makers-bonn-and-mackenzie/> [accessed 25 January 2017].
[148] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.

design course, placing the ground plan at the heart of the design and realisation process:

> Michel felt that it had to start with the ground plan and that everything had to develop from the ground plan because that was what set the movement of the production.[149]

Saint-Denis argues that the ground plan is 'the embryo' of the production of a play because it develops technical accuracy in the student designer, such as 'precise measurements, how to draw to scale and so on'.[150] Perhaps, as a director, the planning and arrangement of stage space has a 'precise significance' for Saint-Denis, as he says 'two steps to the right, two steps to the left, such a small move can be full of meaning'.[151]

There is some disagreement between Saint-Denis and Harris about whether the ground plan is central to design. Harris says that she willingly taught students about the ground plan but felt it restricted students' creativity. Her preferred approach was to use model making 'to let that imagination go first and then pull it down into the practicalities'. However, to help students understand the two-dimensional ground plan, Harris would ask students to plot a physical scenario:

> I used to give them a little scenario and say make a plan and a sketch of how that scenario could work [...] people hiding and this and that [...] and they had to invent a way of solving that on the stage.[152]

This exercise indicates that the designer was moving beyond simply being concerned with stage décor to integrating direction and design. Therefore, the third Motley principle that arises from the design course at the London Theatre Studio,

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[149] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[150] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 221.
[151] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 85.
[152] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 23rd June 1992.

is that *settings should accommodate, and be built around, the movement of body in space.*

In *Training for the Theatre,* Saint-Denis refers to a basic, and an advanced design course. Harris explains that this structure emerged at the Old Vic:

> But I don't think one really taught it [at the London Theatre Studio], one just used to help them to evolve it themselves […] and by the time it became the Vic School, there was the basic design course and the advanced course.[153]

The Basic Course, or 'Production Course A' introduces 'technical aspects of the stage' and includes:

1. The stage and its equipment
2. Scenery (various methods of building provided by the master carpenter)
3. Painting of scenery
4. Properties; set dressing, hand props, stage meals and drinks, stage models and mask making
5. Lighting; history of lighting, mixing colours, using a lighting board
6. Terminology of the stage
7. Ground plans/ floor plans

Alongside this training, designers attend classes with acting students in 'Imaginative Background', the aim of which is to give students 'the ways and means of understanding and assimilating the social and cultural climate of every play'. The curriculum here includes; history of the theatre, the evolution of acting spaces, the history of drama and the history of costume.[154] Saint-Denis explains that these sessions would be illustrated with pictorial examples. It was the responsibility

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[153] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 15th March 1992.
[154] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, pp. 135–45.

of the design students on the basic course to research and collate visual materials used in these classes.[155]

The Advanced Course, or 'Production Course B', taught students stage management, special effects, make-up and wigs, stage design, carpentry, painting, colour, costume design and costume making.[156] All students attended 'The Central Class'. This was not a technical class but was devoted to the detailed reading and study of three plays. Saint-Denis taught the advanced course, with Motley teaching the basic course.

So far, I have shown that the aim of the London Theatre Studio manifesto to create a school of acting, was shaped by a range of social and cultural influences. I explained the direct influence of Copeau on Saint-Denis, and the indirect influence of cultural ideas concerned with unifying art and craft, like those associated with the Bauhaus. Furthermore, I have examined the relationship between education and processes of professionalisation in the theatre. Finally, I have described the curriculum of the Production Course. In so doing, I have summarised these ideas into the first three Motley principles. In the next section, I shall extend the analysis beyond the general aim of the London Theatre Studio, to examine each of the pledges made in the advertisement for the Studio that appears in the programme for *Sowers of the Hills,* at the Westminster Theatre.

6.2 'A Permanent Company'

In this part of the chapter, I will examine the first manifesto pledge of the

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[155] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 223.
[156] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, pp. 224–31.

London Theatre Studio; the creation of a permanent Company, that gives 'a more coordinated production than normal West-End conditions permit'. I argue that this aspiration was a response to the perceived commercialisation of theatre between the wars, and that The London Theatre Studio represents what Marshall, in 1947, defined as 'the other theatre'. I will present different perspectives on the emergence of the other theatre, before showing how this contributes to the fourth Motley principle I have identified, that *designers should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources.*

Marshall argues that the economic boom in theatre during World War I created conditions in theatre where 'control of the theatre passed from the hands of men of the theatre into the hands of men with money':[157]

> Theatres were sold and resold, let and sublet over and over again, each time at a bigger price. For anyone who had the bricks and mortar, knowledge of the theatre was unnecessary. It was only too easy to make money out of the uncritical war-time audience.[158]

Popular performance forms that contributed to this boom, according to D'Monté, include revue, spectacles, musicals, patriotic plays and anti-war plays.[159]

The 1843 Theatres Act amended theatre licensing law, permitting the Lord Chamberlain to censor plays. Guidelines for censorship meant that plays that were deemed 'indecent', included 'offensive personalities', failed to give due reverence to religion or induced crime, vice, and/or damage relations with a foreign power, were not permitted.[160] Thomas *et al*. suggest that during the wars, the Lord

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[157] Norman Marshall, *The Other Theatre* (London: John Lehman, 1947), p. 15.
[158] Norman Marshall, p. 27.
[159] Rebecca D'Monté, *British Theatre and Performance: 1900-1950* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), p. 155.
[160] D'Monté, p. 72.

Chamberlain's Office adopted a consultative approach to censorship. However, this created an atmosphere of self-censorship amongst theatre managers. For example, an innocuous play could be refused a licence in order to discourage others from producing plays with similar themes.[161] Marshall argues that 'the other theatre' emerged in response to this:

> The other theatre struggled against the timidity of the theatrical manager and the tyranny of the censor, who between them were reducing the English theatre to a dead level of mediocrity.[162]

Marshall gives the consequences of censorship as 'bored' actors engaged in 'conscientious repetition […] of parts that had been in their repertoires for years'.[163] Thomas *et al*. define the 'commercial theatre' of the inter-war period as comprising of 'popular light entertainment', 'musical comedies, bedroom farces, and revues', with West End theatres catering for the 'middle-classes', content with a largely 'unchallenging repertoire', by writers like Noel Coward, Somerset Maugham and Terrence Rattigan.[164] Harris gives her view of theatre in this period, describing it as 'nonsense', 'lacking in any kind of belief in anything', 'just froth', claiming that 'There were no plays that really taxed one's intellect at all'.[165]

Theatre clubs referred to as the 'Sunday societies' were membership only theatres that provided a way for theatre makers and playwrights to evade censorship laws.[166] Marshall associates these clubs with 'raw acting',[167] simple design and

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[161] David Thomas, David Carlton, and Anne Etienne, *Theatre Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 111.
[162] Norman Marshall, p. 13.
[163] Norman Marshall, p. 21.
[164] Thomas, Carlton, and Etienne, p. 111.
[165] Richard Eyre, *Talking Theatre* (London: Nick Hern Books Ltd, 2013), p. 31.
[166] D'Monté, p. 191.
[167] Norman Marshall, p. 21.

intimate venues.[168] The other theatre was situated away from the West End 'struggling for existence in strange out of the way places'.[169] Marshall's choice of the word 'struggling' matters because he associates the absence of commercial success with artistic endeavour. Rebellato suggests that the 'other theatre' was a response to cultural and imperial decline in Britain, where the maintenance of authority and prestige was a tactic for preserving the notion of empire.[170] This is indicated in this somewhat reductive distinction between commerce and artistry, where claims to artistry represent an assertion of authority. However, in actuality, there was cross-fertilisation between the commercial theatre and the other theatre. For example, Moore argues that one form of commercial theatre, the mixed form of revue, did allow for the incorporation of 'the serious experiments of repertory groups'[171] alongside the profitable and popular star turns. Marshall also concedes that plays developed in the other theatre, often provided the source of new material in the West End.[172]

In the other theatre, there was a preference for small spaces where audiences could connect more readily with the 'reality' on stage.[173] The smaller, intimate spaces of the other theatre, D'Monté suggests, influenced approaches to design. There was no space available for the usual proscenium arch, orchestra pit or footlights and therefore productions were 'run on a shoestring, so staging effects were limited'.[174] This is reflected in the fourth Motley principle that *designers*

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[168] Norman Marshall, p. 36.
[169] Norman Marshall, p. 11.
[170] Rebellato, p. 131.
[171] James Ross Moore, 'Girl Crazy: Musicals and Revue Between the Wars', in *Theatre Between the Wars*, ed. by Clive Barker and Maggie B. Gale (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 88–112 (p. 89).
[172] Norman Marshall, p. 14.
[173] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 56.
[174] D'Monté, p. 191.

should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources.

6.2.1 Thrift and the Unified Production at the London Theatre Studio

Despite the creative collaboration that existed between Montgomery, Sophie and Harris, with each taking responsibility for different aspects of production, Harris says it is important to have a single designer oversee costume and set design, otherwise it is 'like painting a landscape and having someone else put the figures in'.[175] Therefore, at the London Theatre Studio it was important that costumes and sets were designed for each production to maintain visual unity. Harris describes the wardrobe policy at the Old Vic Theatre in the 1920s where actors would choose their own costumes, creating 'a bit of a hotchpotch' on stage.[176] Sanderson explains that it was common practice for actors at the end of the nineteenth century to be responsible for their own costume, and that female actors often made their own costumes, with very well-paid actresses sourcing dresses from haute couture houses in Paris.[177] This custom changed with the advent of naturalism at the turn of the twentieth century, as Monks observes:

> The idea that an actor might choose a costume that suited them or looked good for looking-goods sake, was rejected in favour of actors 'serving the play and the wider social truths it sought to expose.[178]

I will return to this idea of 'serving the play', when I examine the next manifesto pledge of the London Theatre Studio.

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[175] Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 28th September 1993.
[176] Eyre, p. 31.
[177] Sanderson, p. 59.
[178] Aoife Monks, 'Re-Dressing the Actor: Modernist Costume', in *The Actor in Costume* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 57–77 (p. 62).

The need to produce new costumes and sets for each production, when resources were limited, meant that the Motleys were often confronted with considerable financial constraints. Gielgud recalls their use of dish rags for Shylock's costume[179] for *The Merchant of Venice* at the Old Vic,[180] that Harris comments upon:

> [T]here was a lot of publicity about the fact that we dressed Shylock in dishcloths […] those open-work square washing up things […] We dyed them all and sewed them all together and made his robe of them.[181]

Motley often used painted scene canvas, in place of expensive dress material and used a technique where canvas is hung, patterns or stencils pinned on and then sprayed with paint. Harris stresses 'You could get an effect and it was much cheaper but this wasn't *cheap* theatre'.[182] Bourdieu proposes that something may be considered 'cheap' because it is 'easily decoded and culturally undemanding', offering 'pleasures that are too immediately accessible', in contrast with 'the deferred pleasures of legitimate art'.[183] This is perhaps an example of where Harris implies that the kind of theatre she is involved with is an example of legitimate art, reminiscent of the 'other theatre', from which the design course emerged.

In summary, I have shown that the London Theatre Studio was part of a movement in the period between the wars, that rejected popular, commercial forms

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[179] Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life*, p. 160.
[180] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, dir. by John Gielgud (London: Old Vic Theatre, 1932).
[181] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 15th March 1992.
[182] Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 1st March 1993.
[183] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 486.

of theatre for small, intimate theatres. I have shown how this influenced simple stage decor, and thrifty and creative approaches to stage and costume design. I have demonstrated that this shaped the fourth of the Motley principles, *to respond creatively to limited financial resources.*

6.3 'Specialists from Every Branch of the Theatre'

In the next part of this chapter, I examine the second manifesto pledge of the London Theatre Studio; the inclusion of 'specialists from every branch of the theatre, artists, musicians, authors etc.' in the company/school. I argue that Saint-Denis' concept of a company comprised of 'ensembliers',[184] possessing 'the ability to merge his individual qualities into an ensemble',[185] moved the designer from the periphery to the mainstream of performance making, integrating design and the designer in the process of production. This contributes to the fifth Motley principle that I have identified, which is that *design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble.*

I previously noted that Copeau was concerned with maintaining 'perfect unity' in the theatre by simplifying the means of realisation,[186] and by creating a school for all involved in the process of realisation.[187] Similarly, Saint-Denis makes the case for a company of 'ensembliers' or 'an artist who aims at unity of general effect'.[188] The ensemble spirit was embedded in the pedagogy and curriculum of the London Theatre Studio and the Old Vic Theatre School. For example, Saint-

[184] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 92.
[185] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 46.
[186] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 125.
[187] Copeau, *Copeau: Texts on Theatre*, p. 10.
[188] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 92.

Denis discouraged teachers from organising their departments into 'independent kingdoms' and so classes were shared between teachers of different subjects. Furthermore, the Old Vic Theatre School was divided into three main subjects; acting, directing, and production/design - with a director at the head of each but Saint-Denis saw it as his role as head of the school to ensure liaison between the three divisions.[189] The integration of coursework between courses occurred in production,[190] as Baldwin suggests 'Actors sewed costumes, constructed sets […] worked as assistant stage managers' and 'technical students played small roles'.[191]

On the Motley Theatre Design Course, Harris emphasised the group identity of each cohort by identifying each with a number, a practice initiated by Saint-Denis at the London Theatre Studio.[192] Later, in the absence of actors and directors, Motley used the place of the studio to foster group cohesion and identity on the Motley course, as I will show in chapter five. In one of Courtney's oral history interviews, when a student asks Harris why Motley students are encouraged to do all their work in the studio, Harris explains that this is deliberate because 'we want you to be together', with Chitty explaining that this a deliberate strategy to encourage collaboration.[193]

6.3.1 United Around the Playwright

The central organising principle around which all elements of performance unite, for Saint-Denis, is the playwright, whom he describes as 'the only completely

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[189] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 99.
[190] Wardle, p. 73.
[191] Baldwin, p. 87.
[192] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 93.
[193] Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 1st March 1993.

creative person'. He says that the ensemble must attempt to 'understand the author's intention and to submit to it'.[194] Harris confirms this, saying that the Studio was united around 'the importance of the play [...] the importance of the dramatist above all, and next of the actor',[195] a point I shall return to in the final part of this chapter, when I consider the design aesthetic that emerged from this approach.

In this arrangement, the designer's role changed from being a decorator of sets to an interpreter of text. For example, Saint-Denis says about design that 'The theatre needs transposition […] It needs 'writing''.[196] This conceptualisation of design reflects the discursive frame that I identified in chapter two; namely *design/scenography as l'écriture scénique.*

The notion of the designer as creative collaborator/interpreter is not unproblematic. For example, Saint-Denis warns against directors being 'dominated' by a designer's 'talent or usefulness'.[197] I explained earlier that the design course at the Old Vic was for two years; with a basic and advanced year. Harris explains that Saint-Denis insisted on teaching the advanced year. She complains that they would agree upon an approach to a play, only for Saint-Denis to change his mind, share it with the advanced design course students but not Harris which she describes as 'embarrassing' for her and 'confusing' for the students.[198] Here, it appears that the director, rather than the designer, has ultimate authority, even when it concerns decisions about the approach and structure of the design course. Harris describes Saint-Denis was 'very, very dominant':

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[194] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 92.
[195] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[196] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 55.
[197] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, pp. 80–81.
[198] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.

> He would require a performance to be […] even if it was out of range of the student, he would require them to reach it […] "I will stretch him so that he can do it" […] It was sort of kill or cure, really, and some of them collapsed under it.[199]

The atmosphere of compliance and submission was reflected in the rules imposed by Saint-Denis for rehearsals. When rehearsing *Noah*, Saint-Denis insisted on actors attending rehearsals in bathing costumes, the aim being to ensure actors were 'stripped mentally and, more or less physically, so that he could build [the actors] up into actors and actresses of his own moulding'.[200] Monks suggests that theatre companies of this period adopted this tactic to remove the privilege of 'star performers', by removing the hierarchy, constructed through clothes.[201] However, at the London Theatre Studio, a new hierarchy supplanted the star system, privileging the playwright, the text and the director.

As I have already remarked, the philosophy of actor training at the London Theatre Studio was that students and company members should be stripped of any actorly affectations. This would then allow, through training, the adoption of skills and behaviours appropriate for Saint-Denis' vision of a new theatre:

> We aim at the complete professional development of this unique artist [who] needs at the beginning of his career something of the naive and open attitude which belongs naturally to children and tends to disappear after adolescence.[202]

Saint-Denis' authoritarian approach is reminiscent of a traditional conservatoire system of training. Ford describes the outcome of conservatoire instruction as the sublimation of individual traits in pursuance of improved

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[199] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[200] Piers Paul Read, *Alec Guinness* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 50.
[201] Aoife Monks, *The Actor in Costume* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 74.
[202] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 108.

technique.[203] Furthermore, Perkins concludes that the defining feature of conservatoire education is 'hierarchy', with 'students learning where they fit in […] and how to respond to, and maximize or mitigate against, their position'.[204]

6.3.2 The Ensemblier in the Hierarchy

At the London Theatre Studio, designers became creative collaborators/interpreters, but remained in service to the text, the director and the actors, in a hierarchy:

> The director is the centre of the organisation, he is the link connecting together all the elements which are involved in a modern production and which being more specialised than ever before, have a tendency to fall apart. He stands for unity, he is the guarantee of intelligence, of efficiency, of quality. I am a director myself![205]

Lacey describes the conceptualisation of the director that emerges 'an authorial imprimatur'.[206] This term defines the director as an auteur, of a performance text that arises from, but attempts to remain faithful to, the play text. The actors are next in the hierarchy, below the director but above the designer because design accommodates the performing body. There is an apparent incongruence here between Saint-Denis' professed desire to create 'ensembliers',[207] who 'merge [their] individual qualities into an ensemble',[208] and the existence of a hierarchy in performance making. Therefore, the positioning of the designer as a

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[203] Biranda Ford, 'What Are Conservatoires for? Discourses of Purpose in the Contemporary Conservatoire' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2010), p. 223.
[204] Rosie Perkins, 'Hierarchies and Learning in the Conservatoire: Exploring What Students Learn through the Lens of Bourdieu', *Research Studies in Music Education*, 35.2 (2013), 197–212 (p. 208).
[205] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 72.
[206] Stephen Lacey, 'Naturalism, Poetic Realism, Spectacle: Wesker's "The Kitchen" in Performance', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 12.47 (1996), 237–48 (p. 241).
[207] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 92.
[208] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 46.

creative collaborator, exposes the need for the working relationship between director and designer to accommodate a greater degree of equality and visibility. Harris reflects on the invisibility of the designer in the creative process:

> They think directors design it too. In all the books about the theatre, they don't mention the designer. They have photographs of the shows; they mention the director, the actors, the theatre, the playwright, the photographer but not the designer. I asked them why and they said, "There isn't room to acknowledge the designer too". Terrible, terrible![209]

In the period between the closure of the London Theatre Studio and the second report of the National Advisory Council of Art Education into 'Vocational Courses in Colleges and Schools of Art' in 1962, it is interesting to note that 'Stage, Film and Television Design' is classified as a vocational discipline, with a designer described as: 'one who, though capable of appreciating creative work, is not normally called upon to initiate such work'.[210] The authorial agency of the designer is constrained in this conceptualisation. However, the approach at the London Theatre Studio sought to create the conditions for creative collaborations, by integrating the designer with the production process. This gives rise to the fifth Motley principle that *design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble*. In the next section, I shall explore the final Motley principle, that *designer and design should serve the play,* in the context of the next manifesto pledge of the London Theatre Studio.

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[209] Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 28th September 1993.
[210] National Advisory Council on Art Education and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design: Coldstream Report. National Archives: ED 54/467, p. 2.

6.4 'A Practical Effort by a Man of the Working Theatre'

The final pledge of the London Theatre Studio manifesto brings together notions I have already explored in this chapter. For example, the 'working theatre' and 'genuine theatre productions' emphasise notions of professionalism and authenticity. Therefore, in this part of the chapter I examine how these ideas contribute towards a particular Motley design aesthetic that Harris calls poetic realism. This aesthetic arises from the final Motley principle; *that the designer and design should serve the play.*

Earlier in this chapter, I explained that the London Theatre Studio aspired to the unified production, with the play text at the centre. Saint-Denis suggests it is 'the author who directs the director to direct his play'.[211] Saint-Denis distinguishes between submission to the text that results in performance that is 'alive, inventive and inspiring', and what he calls 'fantasy', where meaning is 'imposed' on the text.[212] This imposition is an addition, similar to Periton's description of 'stick[ing] unrelated frills on the existing forms', [213] or Rebellato's 'lipstick' that 'adorns the surface'.[214]

Harris says that theatre design should 'express what the dramatist is trying to say' and that the designer's job is 'not to decorate but to design'. She suggests that the rejection of decoration is a feature of the design work of graduates of the Motley course:

> One can always recognise that it is someone from the course but not who it is [...] the approach to the play [...] That it is not a decoration but it is an attempt to express the play itself. To express what the

[211] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 232.
[212] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 78.
[213] Periton, p. 190.
[214] Rebellato, p. 76.

dramatist wanted to say.[215]

Harris rejects what she calls 'decoration'. However, she does not provide any further detail about what decoration is. Instead, she gives the example of the designer Oliver Messel, as typifying a decorative style.[216] Therefore, I will now consider the social and cultural dimensions that shaped Messel's decorative aesthetic.

6.4.1 'The Bright Young Things' and Decorative Design

Messel was part of a friendship group named 'The Bright Young People' by *The Daily Mail* in 1924. This term describes a group of Oxford University students, old Etonians, aristocrats and socialites. Their defining feature, suggests Taylor, is that they had 'glamour, money and lashings of snob appeal'.[217] The phrase was first associated with a particular group of individuals but became emblematic as 'The Bright Young Things', to describe a hedonistic, young, wealthy and privileged generation that contrasted with an older generation traumatised by World War I. For the tabloid media, the group represented a new 'plutography', a 'fusion between a new leisured class and the mechanisms of celebrity'.[218] As Quennell suggests, it was 'an age not of personages but of personalities' where the emphasis was not on what one *is* but what one appears to be. [219]

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[215] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 11th August 1992.
[216] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18th February 1992.
[217] David.J. Taylor, *Bright Young People: The Rise and Fall of a Generation 1918-1940* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 11.
[218] Martin Francis, 'Cecil Beaton's Romantic Toryism and the Symbolic Economy of Wartime Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 45.1 (2006), 90–117 (p. 90).
[219] Cecil Beaton and Peter Quenell, *Time Exposure* (London: Charles Scribner, 1941), p. 13.

As the unofficial photographer of 'The Bright Young Things', and friend of Messel, Cecil Beaton defined brightness through photography, capturing 'Fancy dress parties and High Bohemian jinks' and 'baroque knick-knacks, bead fringes and flowers under glass bells'.[220] In photographic portraits of his peers, Beaton placed the sitter in front of bright reflective backgrounds, such as mirrors, reflective fabric and aluminium foil. The effect was quite literally bright.[221]

[220] Quenell, p. 125.
[221] Quenell, p. 10.

Figure xiv: Photograph by Cecil Beaton: Rex Whistler; Gerald Tyrwhitt-Wilson, 14th Baron Berners; Oliver Messel; Cecil Beaton.

Image reproduced with permission from The Cecil Beaton Archive, Sotheby's.

The notion of brightness embodies a carefree and immature attitude. For example, British Pathé produced a short film in 1925 entitled *Brightening Up the Parties*.[222] The film shows a group of bored guests at a party. The hostess is in a dilemma and brightens the party by introducing childish games. A description in the Manchester Guardian in 1929, suggests about 'The Bright Young Things':

> [T]hey must have wit […] they must be able to throw sticky sweets up to their host's ceilings so that they stick without his venturing to call them to order […] they must do something which somebody would like to protest against but does not for fear of not being appreciative of 'brightness'.[223]

Taylor suggests that 'The Bright Young Things' comprise a shifting social group of 'sets and subsets' that 'move in and out of the limelight'. He identifies the years between 1918 and 1940, as the key period of the group, suggesting that the group is most closely associated with 'Christ Church's Peckwater Quadrangle and Oxford High Street', from 1923 - 1930.[224] At this time Gielgud had moved to Oxford to appear in the 1924 and 1925 seasons at the Oxford Playhouse. Gielgud recalls socialising with friends from Westminster School, who were now undergraduates at Oxford.[225] Gielgud expresses reservations about Beaton in particular, because he says Beaton preferred 'pastiche to correctness'.[226]

Quennel argues that during this period Oxford experienced 'a phase of acute

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[222] British Pathé, *Brightening Up The Parties,* online video recording, British Pathé, 25 February 1925 <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/brightening-up-the-parties-1/query/bright+young+things> [accessed 10 October 2016].
[223] Unknown, 'The Bright Young Thing: American and English Versions', *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1929, p. 9.
[224] Taylor, p. 25.
[225] Morley, p. 57.
[226] Jonathan Croall, *John Gielgud: Matinee Idol to Movie Star* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), p. 319.

aestheticism',[227] with students divided between the 'heavies' and the 'aesthetes'. The 'heavies' are characterised as 'Angry Young Men' concerned with politics and social concerns.[228] In contrast, Croall describes the aesthetes as 'flamboyant', and associates them with 'transient homosexuality'. He describes their attitude as nostalgic because it looks backwards to 'dandyism', a way of dressing and behaving associated with aesthetes in Victorian England.[229] Victorian aesthetes were devoted to the idea of the importance of beauty above all other values, rejecting any notion of use or utility in art.[230] The dandy has a dual-consciousness; '[T]he dandy is a man who is permanently *révolté* but who does not ask for a revolution'.[231] Light suggests that this attitude emerges from 'romantic toryism';[232] a response to growing egalitarianism after the first world war. Romantic toryism privileges 'fancy over reason in its enthusiasms for […] the crown, the illustrious ancestry of the aristocrat, or the dashing chivalry of the soldier'.[233]

In 1964, Susan Sontag wrote *Notes on Camp* to define what she calls the 'camp sensibility'; 'a mode of aestheticism' that embraces 'artifice and exaggeration' and style over content. Sontag describes the camp sensibility as 'disengaged, depoliticised - or at least apolitical'. She further argues that 'Camp art is often decorative art, emphasising texture, sensuous surface and style at the expense of content'.[234]

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[227] Quenell, p. 8.
[228] Tony Howard, p. 138.
[229] Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life*, p. 57.
[230] Robert Vincent Johnson, *Aestheticism* (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 1.
[231] Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, 'Rule-Following in Dandyism: "Style" as an Overcoming of "Rule" and "Structure"', *The Modern Language Review*, 90.2 (1995), 285–95 (p. 290).
[232] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 156.
[233] Francis, p. 93.
[234] Susan Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', *Partisan Review*, 31.4 (1964), 515–30 (p. 517).

Rebellato's analysis of mid-twentieth century drama at the Royal Court, established by Devine, suggests that there was a reaction against a decorative aesthetic, symbolised by a desire to unify inner 'truth' and outer presentation. Drawing on Derrida's notion of iterability in texts, Rebellato proposes that play texts mediated by technique or 'playmaking' were perceived as interrupting the 'authentic' or inner voice of the author; a 'highly polished outside flourishing at the expense of inner feeling', like a 'lipstick' that 'adorns the surface, hides the interior'.[235]

In a profile piece about Messel in *Theatre World*, Corathiel likens Messel's design with 'the shop window of a sovereign's pomp'.[236] The association of Messel's aesthetic with majesty is reminiscent of Light's claim that romantic toryism sentimentalises pre-industrial values, as Strong suggests:

> Messel's was a gossamer world of gilded enchantment, always bent on lifting the subject matter of his design away from reality. No other designer whose work I can remember has ever given his audience better rose-coloured spectacles through which to peer at the past.[237]

Therefore, the notion of brightness embraces excess over restraint, and is associated with privilege, hedonism, youth and wealth. Brightness revels in surface decoration and affect and is typified by flamboyance and extravagance. It is neither progressive nor conservative in outlook but adopts the *attitude* of rebellion, through unconstrained excess. These features of the decorative style conform to Sontag's notion of 'camp' and Rebellato's discussion of iterability arising from aesthetic

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[235] Rebellato, p. 76.
[236] Elizabeth H.C. Corathiel, 'Creative Artists in the Theatre No. 4: Oliver Messel', *Theatre World* (London, May 1950), p. 30 (p. 30).
[237] Roy Strong, 'The Rule of Taste : Design at Glyndebourne , 1935 - 84', *The Musical Times*, 125.1695 (1984), 258–62 (p. 259).

disunity and excess.

Rebellato describes the Motley design aesthetic as 'flamboyant', grouping them with designers like Cecil Beaton and John Piper and, in this way appears to be associating Motley's work with a similar aesthetic.[238] However, I disagree with this view and in the next part of this chapter, I will show that Motley actively rejected flamboyance in their design aesthetic, and that this arose directly from an emphasis on designing through the play text. Therefore, I will first examine Messel's theatre design work, to demonstrate the distinction between decorative design and poetic realism.

6.4.2 The Decorative Design Aesthetic

The two examples of Messel's work that I will analyse are *Heaven* from Cochran's 1930 Revue that opened at the London Pavilion Theatre on 27th March 1930,[239] and *Helen!,*[240] an adaptation of *La Belle Hélène'* by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy,[241] that premiered at the Adelphi Theatre on the 30th January 1932.[242] Messel designed both productions for the theatrical manager, Charles Blake Cochran. Cochran is associated with 'theatrical revue',[243] describing himself as a 'showman'.[244] The peak of revue's popularity was in the 1920s but began at the turn of the twentieth century with the development of large variety theatres.[245]

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[238] Rebellato, p. 96.
[239] Beverley Nichols, 'Charles B. Cochran's 1930 Revue', *The Play Pictorial* (London, June 1930), pp. 90–104.
[240] Alan Patrick Herbert, *Helen!*, dir. by Charles B Cochran (London: Adelphi Theatre, 1932).
[241] Alan Patrick Herbert, *Helen: A Comic Opera in Three Acts Based upon 'Le Belle Hélène' by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, The English Version.* (London: Chappell & Co Ltd; Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1932).
[242] Charles Castle, *Oliver Messel: A Biography* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), p. 262.
[243] Charles B Cochran, *Cock-a-Doodle-Do* (London: J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd., 1941), p. 110.
[244] Charles. B. Cochran, *Secrets of a Showman* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1925).
[245] Moore, p. 93.

The mixed entertainment of revue developed from variety.[246] A reviewer of *Cochran's 1930 Revue* captures the spirit of the revue, and perhaps something of the camp sensibility defined by Sontag:

> Caviare, with Vodka sauce, champagne extra sec reserve, Mayfair with a dash of young Chelsea, the tang of the olive to flaunt the bitter against the sweet, the restless gaiety of disdaining Youth, the airs and graces of nymphs, the mocking laughter of Satyrs – here we are again, watching the inter-play of decorous and daring, light and shade, folly and finesse.[247]

The over-reliance of the West End on 'revivals and importations from America'[248] and the absence of investment in new work during this period, gave Cochran an opportunity to capitalise on a British theatre-going public that 'was becoming conscious of the visual side of the theatre', with Cochran inviting Messel, along with friends Rex Whistler and Cecil Beaton, to provide designs for *Cochran's 1930 Revue* at the London Pavillion.[249]

The analysis will focus upon two scenes; the *Heaven* section of Cochran's 1930 Revue, and Helen's chamber scene in *Helen!* as Messel chose to use an all-white colour scheme for both scenes. Sarah Woodcock describes white as a 'taboo colour' in the theatre of the 1930's because of its effect on skin tone, making it appear yellow. It also tended to bleach out costume detail.[250]

The premise for *Heaven* is that it provides the setting for a series of satirical encounters with dead historical figures. They are all greeted at the gate by Nell

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[246] Moore, p. 88.
[247] Eric Marshall, *The Passing Shows: "Cochran's 1930 Revue," at the London Pavilion*, (review of Cochran's 1930 Revue (London Pavilion, London) by C.B.Cochran), (London: The Tatler, 16 April, 1930), p. 116.
[248] Norman Marshall, p. 14.
[249] Charles B Cochran, *Showman Looks On* (London: J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd., 1946), pp. 224–25.
[250] Sarah Woodcock, 'Messel on Stage', in *Oliver Messel in the Theatre of Design*, ed. by Thomas Messel (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc, 2012), pp. 55–84 (p. 58).

Gwynn with the phrase "But how did you get here?".[251] The analysis is of production photographs published in *The Play Pictorial.*[252] The first is a collection of four images that show interactions between two characters at a time; Lord Byron and Nell Gwynn, Lola Montez and Lord Nelson, The Empress Josephine and Mr. Gladstone and 'The Singers'. Then, there are two production photographs. The first is entitled 'The lover and His Lady: Alice Nikitina and Serge Lifar'; and 'The Apaches in a Heavenly but Exotic Environment'.

[251] Harry Stone, *A Century of Comedy and Musical Revue* (Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2009), p. 76.
[252] Nichols.

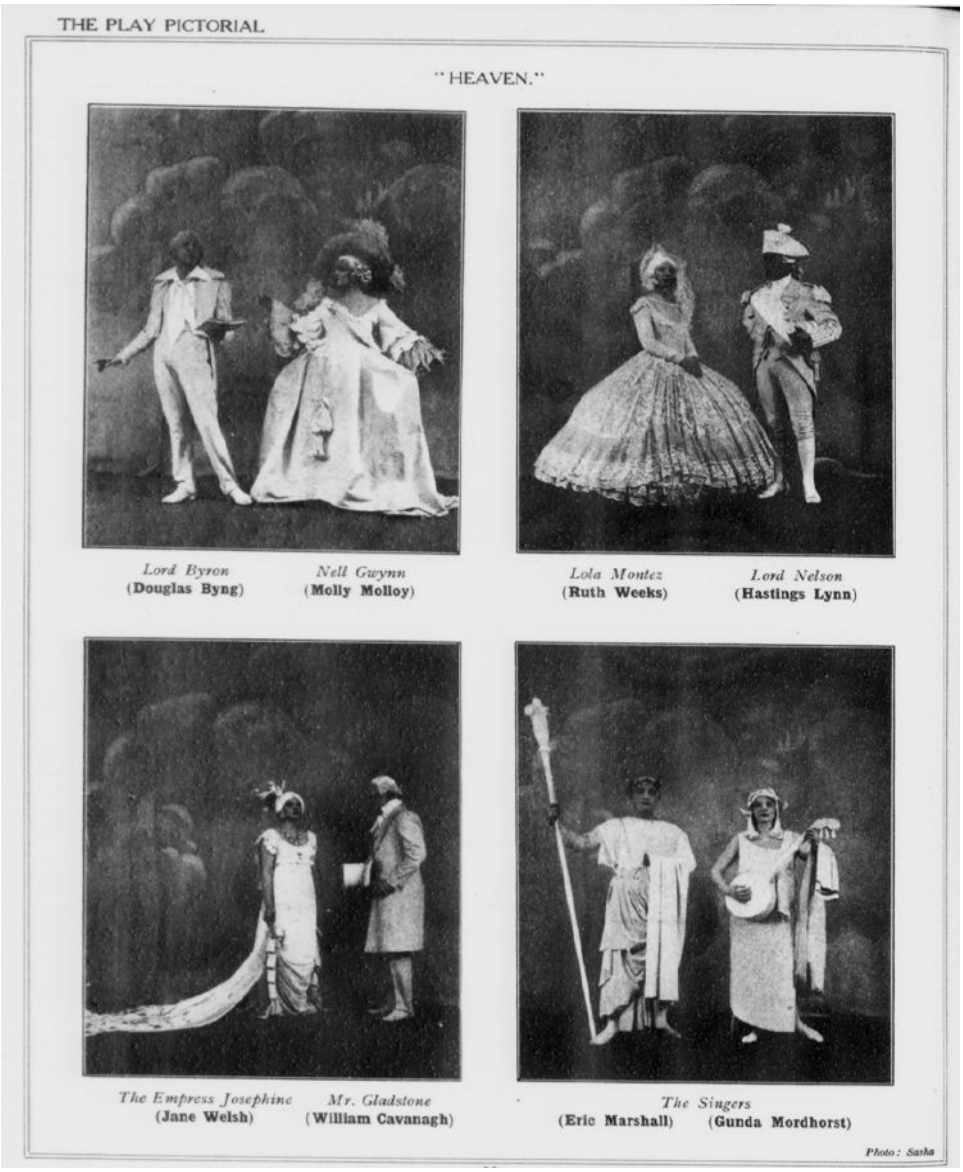

Figure xv: Scenes designed by Oliver Messel for the 'Heaven' section of *Cochran's 1930 Revue*, production photographs in *Play Pictorial.*

Figure xvi: Scenes designed by Oliver Messel for the ‘Heaven’ section of *Cochran's 1930 Revue*, production photographs in *Play Pictorial.*

The characters are photographed in front of the same painted backdrop of clouds. At this time, painted scenery was especially common in English revue, which contrasted with European design where solid three-dimensional pieces and ramps were used.[253] Cole suggests that there had been a return at this time to the painted style characteristic of nineteenth-century perspective scenery, where:

> [T]he painter's art is dominant; and the settings are usually composed of back cloths, cut drops, and wings, with few platforms, steps, or three-dimensional built pieces.[254]

Play Pictorial includes photographs of other scenes in Cochran's revue, and these show painted back cloths. They include a design by Messel for *Piccadilly, 1830*, that uses a painted perspective technique.[255] Revue alternated songs, dance and sketches, switching between satire and sentiment and so the stage needed to accommodate quick scene changes, and this may be the reason for the choice of painted backdrops.[256]

The first photograph depicts the characters of Lord Byron and Nell Gwynn. Lord Byron wears the large open collared shirt and loose neck covering associated with romantic poets of the nineteenth century. The collars of his jacket seem over-emphasised as if to accentuate the stylistic flourishes of the period costume. Nell Gwynne is wearing a dress with a hoop pannier. Historical accuracy does not appear to be the aim of the decorative style, instead it aims for historical *effect*.

In the second photograph, there are the figures of Lola Montez , mistress of the Ludwig I King of Bavaria and Lord Horatio Nelson. Lola Montez looks into the

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[253] Wendell Cole, 'Current Trends in European Scene Design', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 5.1 (1953), 27–32 (p. 28).
[254] Cole, p. 27.
[255] Castle, p. 55.
[256] Moore, p. 94.

distance, her hands held demurely at the front of her dress. Lord Nelson stands looking at Lola Montez. He carries a telescope in his left hand.

In the third photograph, the figures of the Empress Josephine, mistress of Napoleon Bonaparte, and Mr. Gladstone are shown. Josephine is dressed in a long empire line gown, gathered at the side to knee height with a long trail running from the back of the dress. Her arms are bare, and she wears a large bulky necklace. The headpiece is all white, with a white sprouting decoration emerging from the top. The overall effect is exotic. She looks into the distance whilst Mr. Gladstone stands facing her with his top hat held in front of him.

In the next photograph, two characters are shown; 'The Singers'. The male singer holds a long white staff, which is topped with a Fleur De Lis. He carries the excess material from his gown in the other hand. The female singer wears a simple shift dress, with a plain cotton head dress. She is playing a stringed instrument.

The next photograph is entitled *The Lover and His Lady: Alice Nikitina and Serge Lifar*. There are clouds which seem to be on a series of wings, possibly three, placed in front of a backdrop. Upstage centre, there are three pairs of guards. Messel has added feathers to their helmets and added exaggerated upper leg costume which looks a little like open weaved baskets moulded around the actors' thighs. Their costumes and pikes are entirely white. Each pair of guards stands on graduated steps with their pikes crossed, barring entry to heaven. At the centre of the crossed pikes stand two former members of the Ballet Russes; Serge Lafar and Alice Nikitina.

The next image is entitled *The Apaches in a Heavenly but Exotic Environment*. Apache Dancers were an act in which dancing was combined with

stylised casualised abuse of the female dancer.[257] As in the previous photograph, the stage is filled with the characters in the piece. This time the guards have uncrossed their pikes and stand upstage centre. In front of them are two characters; the male wears broad flat cap, striped jumper and wide trousers. The female wears plain white baggy trousers, a plain white top and both performers wear long white cotton scarves knotted at the neck.

Messel was aware that the all-white scheme was so bright under stage lighting, that it was necessary to introduce texture into the costumes, which he achieved by attacking them with 'charlady's swabs, loofah's and bath scrubbers'[258] to achieve the desired effect. An all-white colour scheme draws attention to surface appearance. This is reminiscent of Sontag's definition of the camp sensibility 'emphasising texture, sensuous surface and style at the expense of content'.[259] Messel's design is stylised and non-naturalistic; the appearance of the clouds are cartoonish and the costumes are historically informed but exaggerated, particularly noticeable in the leg wear and feathered helmets of the costumes of the guards in the group scenes.

Nichols praises Messel's approach as 'An exquisite rhapsody in white' and that 'the white scene and white dresses are lovely things with precisely that flash of an artist in them that so much of the entertainment lacks'.[260] A reviewer in *The Times* expresses concerns about Messel's design being 'too conspicuous to be

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[257] British Pathé, *Alexis And Dorrano - Celebrated Adagio Dancers,* online video recording, British Pathé 6 December 1934 (United Kingdom: British Pathe, 1934) <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/alexis-and-dorrano-celebrated-adagio-dancers/query/Danse+apache> [accessed 5th June 2018].
[258] Woodcock, p. 58.
[259] Sontag, p. 517.
[260] Nichols, p. 90.

comfortable'.[261] Street, writing in the Journal of the Royal Society of the Arts, comments that 'instead of being the background the decoration is almost the most important part of the entertainment'.[262] Messel's design, it seems, was an entertainment in its own right.

6.4.3 The Decorative Design Aesthetic: An Analysis of Helen!

Helen! was Messel's first full-length production for Cochran.[263] Messel selected an all-white colour scheme for Act II, Scene III, 'Helen's Chamber'. Production photographs and drawings by Messel provide the focus for analysis.

The production photograph of Act II, Scene III, shows a bed on a raised platform. The platform looks like white marble. The bed is covered with what appear to be white furs. There are a number of cushions and pillows at the head of the bed and at least ten are visible in the image. The bed is flanked by plaster swans, that are larger than life-sized. The swans are referred to in the operetta, in an exchange between Helen and the prophet Calchas, where Helen refers to the seduction of her mother Leda, by Zeus, in the form of a swan.[264] Messel's choice of the over large swans refers to sexual infidelity, anticipating Helen's infidelity to King Menelaus, with Paris. The symbolism implied by the swans contrasts with the statue of cupid which stands on a marble plinth holding a large harp. In Messel's

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[261] Unknown, *Entertainments, London Pavilion: Cochran's 1930 Revue* (review of Cochran's 1930 Revue (London Pavilion, London by C.B.Cochran), (London, The Times, 28 March 1930).
[262] John Street, 'News of the Week: Cochran's Revue, 1930', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 78.4038 (1930), 579–85 (p. 584).
[263] C.W. Marshall, 'A. P. Herbert's Helen and Every Marriage Since 1937', *Theatre Notebook*, 67.1 (2013), 44–57 (p. 46).
[264] C.W. Marshall, p. 46.

original drawing of this scene, cupid holds a bow and arrow.[265] Again here, the symbolism refers to the love affair between Helen and Paris. Above the cupid, and to the full height of the visible theatre space, is a domed gazebo-like structure, supported on four tall posts. The dome of the structure is covered in stylised floral plaster work and the top of each post is embellished with palm leaves. White diaphanous material hangs between each of the four posts. There is a decorative chandelier that is suspended just in front of the gazebo. The chandelier, in shape and design, resembles a crown, with the same shape apparent in Messel's design for the scene. Suspended between the chandelier and the two front corners downstage hang two vast pieces of more white diaphanous material, with two further pieces connected to two of the supporting posts. Downstage, at the top of the image, white swagged material can be seen.

[265] Oliver Messel, 'Set Design for Helen!', *Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre and Performance Collection*, 1932 <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O124898/set-design-messel-oliver-hilary/> [accessed 8 April 2013].

Figure xvii: Scene design drawing of Act II, Scene III, ‘Helen’s Chamber’, in *Helen!* By Oliver Messel

Reproduced with permission from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

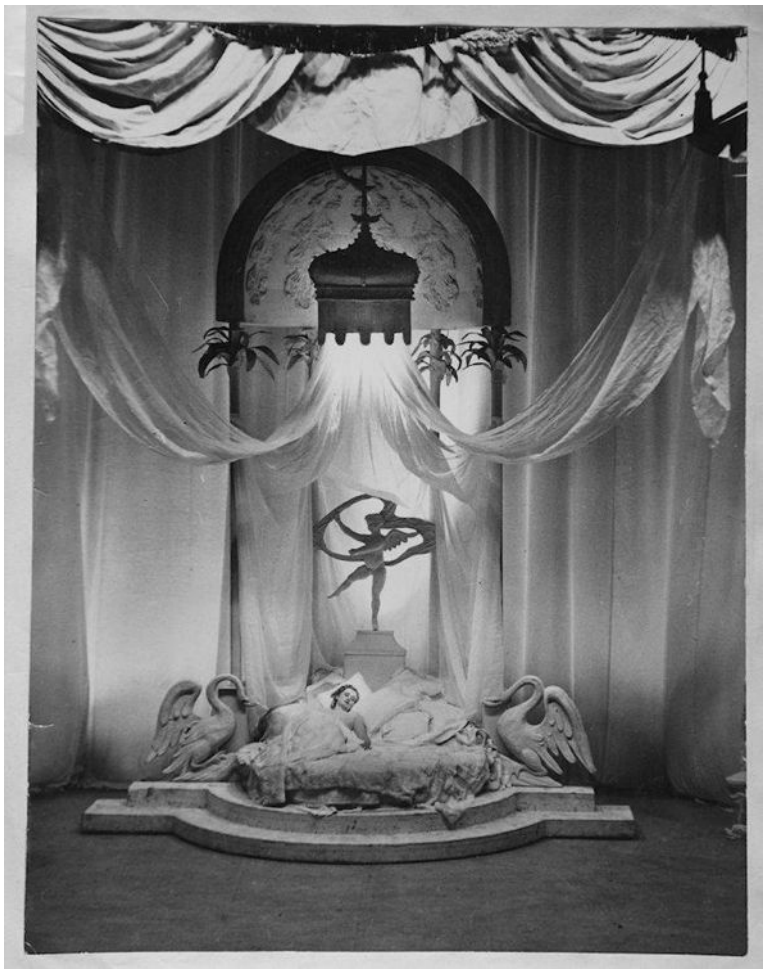

Figure xviii: Production photograph of scene design. Act II, Scene III, ‘Helen’s Chamber’, in Helen! By Oliver Messel.

The scene in Helen's chamber contrasts with the other scenes in the production. A review in *The Times* describes a 'magnificent panorama of colour', contrasting 'scarlet Spartans', 'blue and white Trojans', 'gold and yellow' with Paris dressed in a 'gorgeous suit of gold cloth'. The production appears to have been extravagant in its use of different materials:

> Linen […] used as freely as some of the richer fabrics […] Miles of dyed nets […] vast quantities of metal cloths […] rich silks […] taffetas […] velvets […] plumes of ostrich feathers.[266]

Messel's designs for *Helen!* comprised a bricolage of different periods and styles. The same reviewer in *The Times* observes influences of 'Flaxman's drawings' and 'Wedgwood's plaques' alongside 'a mixed tea-gown and toga era, with borrowings of beauty from more recent times'. Similarly, Woodcock describes Messel's style as a fusion of 'Greek temples, Baroque colonnades, Rococo drapes, Empire Bedrooms and Louis XVI carousels'.[267]

Earlier I explained that costume design at the London Theatre Studio sought to accommodate bodily movement. In contrast, in *Helen!* the look of the costume took precedence over use. For example, a reviewer remarks upon the design of Helen's dress on her return to Sparta with Menelaus:

> [S]he is clad in a tea-gown of British net in 10 shades of blue, which, as it was made of about 160 yards of material, must have been difficult to manage on board a Spartan galley'.[268]

This description is reminiscent of Sontag's definition of camp, where she says

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[266] Unknown, *London Fashions: Seen at the Theatre* (review of 'Helen!' (Adelphi Theatre, London) by C.B.Cochran), (London, The Times, 3 February 1932).
[267] Woodcock, p. 64.
[268] Unknown, 'London Fashions: Seen at the Theatre'.

'Camp is a woman walking around in a dress made of three million feathers'.[269] Sontag's example typifies camp, because it privileges the aesthetic, decorative and textural qualities of the dress.[270] It is not concerned with beauty, but with style and effect.[271] Furthermore, there is a 'generous' quality to camp because it 'finds success in certain passionate failures'.[272] There is a knowing impracticality and failure associated with wearing a dress made of 160 yards of material, in the setting of a Spartan galley.

Colour, texture and style dominate the design. As another reviewer in *The Times* concludes 'I shall long remember the glamour and the glitter'[273] and another remarks:

> Seldom has so much colour and loveliness been seen on the stage. the silvery whiteness of Helen's Chamber is a vision to be remembered, and equally beautiful is the turquoise blue of Paris's Chamber at Troy. But indeed, every one of the nine scenes is a delight to the eye.[274]

Another reviewer notes the audience gasping as the curtain was raised on the 'dazzling' white scene; 'Almost overnight fashionable London interiors were transformed from oriental and brilliant colours […] to white, white and white'.[275]

Messel's design for *Helen!* revels in artifice and aestheticism. Corathiel remarks that a Messel design 'transports [the spectator] to a world mid-way between real and unreal'.[276] It may be also be significant, in the case of *Helen!*, that

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[269] Sontag, p. 522.
[270] Sontag, p. 516.
[271] Sontag, p. 517.
[272] Sontag, p. 530.
[273] Unknown, *Helen! At the Adelphi* (review of 'Helen!' (Adelphi Theatre, London) by C.B.Cochran), (London: The Times, 29 April 1932).
[274] Unknown, *The Playhouses: Helen! At the Adelphi*, (review of 'Helen!' (Adelphi Theatre, London) by C.B.Cohrane), (London, 6 February 1932).
[275] Woodcock, p. 64.
[276] Corathiel, p. 30.

the form of an operetta could be said to be iterable; characters who are singing to one another can never be mistaken for real people. Sontag suggests that 'whole art forms can become saturated with camp',[277] arguing (albeit reductively) that opera is a genre that could be described as a camp art form.

The effect of the spectacular in stage design has the effect of interrupting the unity of a performance, by drawing the audience's attention to the visual dimension of performance. Corathiel celebrates this, describing Messel's productions as 'stimulating, highly adventurous' productions that 'do not rely upon the spoken word alone.[278] In contrast, Irving argues that privileging design over text has the effect of 'delaying the surrender of the audience to the impact of the play'.[279] Decorative design could be described as being saturated with camp because it emphasises artifice and aestheticism.

By the end of the 1920s the hedonism of 'The Bright Young Things' was incongruent with the deepening recession of the 1930s. Jobling suggests that Messel, and his contemporaries, 'satisfied the public thirst for escapist spectacle as the world economy was beginning to unravel'.[280] The new 'dream palaces' of cinema provided escapist spectacle much more effectively, their new role reflected in their highly decorative interiors.[281] The London Theatre Studio appears to have been moving in a different direction, and the Motley aesthetic of poetic realism emerged from this. In the next section, I shall first define the features of the Motley

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[277] Sontag, p. 517.
[278] Corathiel, p. 30.
[279] Laurence Irving, 'Setting the Stage', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce*, 106.5022 (1958), 389–407 (p. 398).
[280] Paul Jobling, 'A Twitch on the Thread - Oliver Messel between Past and Present', in *Unravelling Nymans. Unravelling.*, ed. by M.J Smith and Polly Harknett (Sussex: Unravelled Arts Ltd., 2012), pp. 48–55 (p. 55).
[281] Juliet Gardener, *The Thirties: An Intimate History of Britain* (London: Harper Press, 2011), p. 359.

aesthetic of poetic realism, before analysing Motley designs for the 1946 and 1953 productions of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

6.4.4 Poetic Realism

The year that *Helen!* appeared on stage, was the year that the Motley had their first programme credit for designing costumes for the 1932 OUDS production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Grein reviewed both productions in an article that documents the contrast between decoration and what Grein calls a 'new form of art'. In *Helen!* the decorative form reaches the fullness of its expression:

> [E]ven in London, there has never been a spectacle so grand in its conception [...] so overwhelming is the appeal to the eye that the music is sometimes swamped by the brilliancy of the pictures.[282]

Grein's review of *Helen!* contrasts with the review of *Romeo and Juliet*, where he describes 'scenery of the scantiest', where 'the descriptive power of the word and often the 'insistence on a certain phrase' is emphasised. He notes the unity of the ensemble production, suggesting there is evidence of 'incessant rehearsal' that produces 'harmony' in performance. These contrasting reviews reflect Rebellato's description of the turning point between two kinds of theatre:

> One places the writer as the beating heart of theatrical creativity, with all other elements arraigned around him or her. The second reveals a more dispersed network of theatre workers, offering independent attractions to the audience.[283]

Where Corathiel describes Messel's style as 'poetic drama', Harris refers to

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[282] Jacob Thomas Grein, *The World of the Theatre: "Evelyn Laye and Offenbach - The Compagnie De Quinze"* (review of 'Romeo and Juliet' (New Theatre, London) by John Gielgud; and 'Helen!' (The Adelphi Theatre, London) by C.B.Cochran), (London: Illustrated London News, 20 February 1932).
[283] Rebellato, p. 73.

the new style as ‘poetic realism’.

Saint-Denis distinguishes between ‘deep realism’, which ‘studies and expresses the nature of things’ and ‘superficial realism’ that he says is more closely related to naturalism.[284] Saint-Denis admired Stanislavski’s quest for truthfulness in acting but argues that naturalism fails in the ‘visual realm’ because it amounts to ‘theatrical illusion’, rather than ‘profound truth’.[285] To illustrate the distinction, Saint-Denis recounts seeing Lorca’s theatre company, La Barraca, and meeting with Lorca in 1933. Saint-Denis says he was impressed by truth of the poeticism of Lorca’s writing.[286] Furthermore, Saint-Denis goes on to associate poeticism with a particularly English attitude:

> I had come to realise that by tradition as well as temperament the English have a more down-to-earth understanding of theatre than the French – they react directly and sensitively to poetry. They have also a great openness to the physical poetry of objects and people. Shakespeare to them is *alive* – not intellectually – but concretely.[287]

Perhaps it was this belief that drew Saint-Denis to Gielgud and Devine and contributed to his decision to move to the UK.

Lacey attributes the origination of the term ‘poetic realism’ in theatre to Albert Hunt, who used the term in an article for *Encore*, describing George Devine’s work at the English Stage Company:

> The poetic in poetic realism meant, on the one hand, the crystallizing of meaning in a moment in the dramatic action, in terms that both appealed to a sense of ‘everyday’ reality and also represented the significance of that reality.[288]

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[284] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 50.
[285] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 36.
[286] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, pp. 39–40.
[287] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 42.
[288] Lacey, p. 240.

Harris attributes the term to the theatre director and filmmaker Lindsay Anderson[289] who, in talking about his own work, describes the poetic as having an expansive quality:

> Probably all my work, even when it has been very realistic, has struggled for a poetic quality - for larger implications than the surface realities might suggest.[290]

Lacey extends this idea to the staged play:

> 'Poetic' also suggested a self-referential theatricality which constituted an explicit recognition of its aesthetic strategies - a symbolism that was not constrained by the need to maintain photographic plausibility yet did not sacrifice an essential 'realism'.[291]

Poetic realism, then, does not aspire to mimesis or naturalism. It is knowingly theatrical and poetic but it does not draw attention to its unreality through spectacle, embellishment or decoration. It is an aesthetic style that attempts to work in harmony with other elements of performance, united around the text. Harris provides, as an example of design in the poetic realist style, the contrasting approaches of Motley's early costume designs for the animals in *Noah* with those in the Compagnie De Quinz production:

> When we did it, we tried to make the whole animal […] But when they did it, they just had heads and hands and tails and things, and the rest of them was completely human. And that was much nearer to his [Saint-Denis'] basic belief, I think.[292]

Harris refers to poetic realism as having the quality of 'Truth above all things

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[289] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[290] Lindsay Anderson, *Lindsay Anderson: The Diaries*, ed. by Paul Sutton (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 184.
[291] Lacey, p. 241.
[292] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.

[…] rather than theatricality. And yet it had to have a theatrical value'.[293] It does not aspire to everyday reality but adopts symbolism and poeticism to 'crystallise' truthfulness. Now that I have defined poetic realism, in the way conceptualised by Harris, I will examine the aesthetic through analysis of two Motley designs for productions of *Antony and Cleopatra,* in 1946[294] and 1953.[295]

6.4.5 Poetic Realism in Practice

I will illustrate 'poetic realism' through analysis of two Motley designs for *Antony and Cleopatra* by William Shakespeare. The first production was at the Piccadilly Theatre in 1946, the second was performed at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1953. The 1946 production marked the start of a director/designer partnership between Margaret Harris and Byam-Shaw that lasted over thirty years.[296] These productions have been chosen for analysis for three reasons. First, in 1946, emigres of the London Theatre Studio began to return to London after the war. This was the same group that, in 1947, was to begin the project of the Old Vic Theatre School.[297] Second, Mullin argues that the productions are related, with the 1946 production providing a 'prototype' for the 1953 production.[298] Finally, the 1953 production illustrates the ways in which Motley defined and refined the poetic realist style, during the period when they were resident designers and design course leaders at the Old Vic School, between 1947 and 1952.

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[293] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[294] William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, dir. by Glen Byam-Shaw (Stratford Upon Avon: Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1946).
[295] William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, dir. by Glen Byam-Shaw (Stratford Upon Avon: Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1953).
[296] Mullin, p. 112.
[297] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 23rd June 1992.
[298] Mullin, p. 112.

6.4.6 Motley Design for *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1946

Margaret Harris says that the 1946 production was significant because it was the first time Harris had worked on a design without the other Motleys. Montgomery had remained in the United States after the World War II and Sophie had started to work in film design.[299] Harris describes the set as 'clumsy', partly because this was the first time she had prepared sketches of the design.[300] Furthermore, costume decisions were informed by the belief that Edith Evans, at this stage in her late forties, could not be dressed in Egyptian costume. Instead, Harris took Tiepolo's paintings as inspiration for the costume designs. Even with this concession, Harris says that Evans 'seemed old to young people, to play Cleopatra'.[301] Harris says that the London Theatre Studio collaborators, who were involved in this production, were nervous about returning to the theatre after the war, crediting Binkie Beaumont with encouraging them to return to work. It represented a pause, 'it was people trying to find their feet again'.[302] There are no photographs of the 1946 *Antony and Cleopatra* therefore the analysis will be of two gouache set renderings of the play.

The first set rendering shows two arched entrances upstage. Both entrances are part of stage height flats. The arch stage left is significantly bigger than the arch stage right. The two arches are connected by a curved pathway, which curves downstage. Slightly upstage left is a cylindrical multi-platform construction, with steps stage right of this that leads to the first platform. The lower platform has an arch through it and, what appear to be entrances within it. On top of the first

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[299] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 23rd June 1992.
[300] Mullin, p. 112.
[301] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 23rd June 1992.
[302] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 23rd June 1992.

platform is a smaller cylindrical construction. This too has an archway within it. Upstage there is a columned construction across the length of the stage, at the same height as the lower platform. The scene is an exterior with these scenic elements functioning as architecture. The second set rendering has the same components as the first but the addition of scenic elements, such as table and chairs, swagged material hanging in front of the cylindrical construction, and a chandelier, has changed the function of the scenery into an interior setting.

Figure xix: Set Rendering One: *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1946. Design by Motley.

Image reproduced with permission from The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Figure xx: Set Rendering Two: *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1946. Design by Motley.

The first observation about the two set renderings is that Harris uses one set for many locations, reflected in accounts of the production:

> Its' dominating feature serves equally well for a Roman or and Alexandrian pillar, the masthead of Pompey's ship, or the monument of Cleopatra; sliding partitions and curtains gave us wholly new scenes without delay; and the various levels of the set may be processional ways, different parts of a battlefield or a skyline giving definition to a deep sky of Egyptian blue.[303]

Gothard identifies the 'composite set' as being a feature of Motley's early work which 'revolutionised' staging in the theatre.[304] As I remarked earlier, Harris says that the first time she saw a 'simultaneous design' was by Claud Lovat Fraser for the *Beggars' Opera* in 1920. I highlighted Grace Fraser's claim that the design was influenced by financial constraints. It seems likely that post-war austerity in 1946, may have meant a permanent set would have served a practical function too, by reducing the need to stage multiple locations.

The accompanying notes for the production indicate that the permanent set is also shaped by Harris' initial reading of the text,[305] which notes character position, location and any necessary props. Furthermore, it ensures that changes between scenes would be swift and uninterrupted, removing the need to lower a curtain between scenes. This serves to maintain the flow of the fictional world of the play, giving the 'swift succession of scattered scenes a genuine continuity'[306]

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[303] Unknown, Piccadilly Theatre "Antony and Cleopatra", (a review of 'Antony and Cleopatra' (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon) by Glen Byam-Shaw), (London: The Times, 21 December 1946).
[304] Margaret Harris in conversation with David Gothard and Alison Chitty, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 1st March 1993.
[305] Margaret Harris, 'Performance Notes: Antony and Cleopatra' (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1946) <http://imagesearchnew.library.illinois.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/461220_051_a> [accessed 15 March 2018].
[306] Unknown, Piccadilly Theatre "Antony and Cleopatra", (a review of 'Antony and Cleopatra' (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon) by Glen Byam-Shaw), (London: The Times, 21 December 1946).

Simultaneous design removes barriers between space and time. The significance of the design therefore is not in how it appears, as in decorative design, but on how space is used, as Postelwait suggests:

> The stairs, the bridges, the doors, the gestures all achieve meaning through human presence or absence. The actor-character in space and time is thus the essential need.[307]

Postelwait argues that it is synthesis, rather than dissonance that represents the defining feature of the simultaneous set:

> Dissonance, dialectic, and disaffection prevail in the works and manifestos of modernism. Yet most modernists, whatever their methods of disjunction, aimed for a new synthesis, a fusion of discord elements.[308]

This notion of synthesis and simultaneity in design seems sympathetically aligned to several of the London Theatre Studio ideas; that design should accommodate the body in space, avoid interrupting the authentic voice of the playwright, and be subordinate to the text.

6.4.7 Motley Design for *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1953

Byam-Shaw's aim for the 1953 production of *Antony and Cleopatra*, was to avoid Shakespeare plays being used as a 'star vehicle'.[309] The approach is reminiscent of that of the London Theatre Studio, with the emphasis on an ensemble production. This analysis is of three black and white production photographs of Act I, Scene I; Act I, Scene IV, and Act II, Scene VII. These images have been chosen

[307] Postlewait, p. 23.
[308] Postlewait, p. 8.
[309] Mullin, p. 139.

because they demonstrate the ways in which a permanent set may be altered by the use of canopies, curtains and colour to indicate different locations. I will also refer to colour gouache renderings of some scenes.

Figure xxi: Production Photograph, Act I, Scene I of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakepeare Memorial Theatre, 1953. Design by Motley.

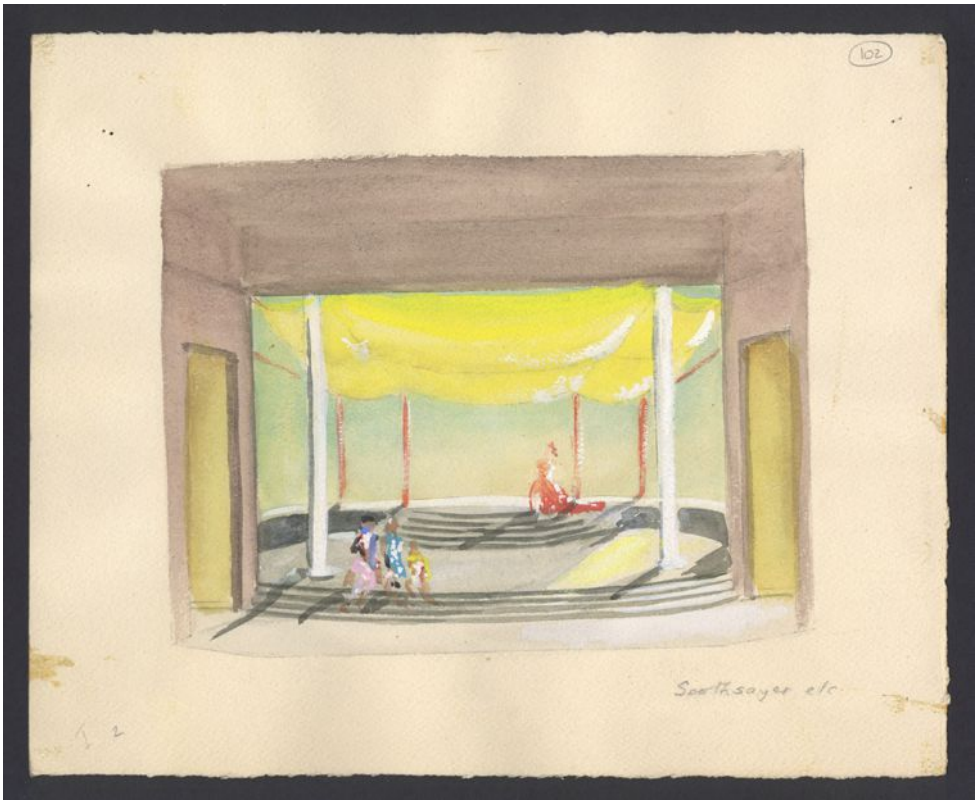

Figure xxii: Set Rendering, Act I, Scene I of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakepeare Memorial Theatre, 1953. Design by Motley.

Figure xxiii: Production Photograph, Act I, Scene IV of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakepeare Memorial Theatre, 1953. Design by Motley.

Figure xxiv: Production Photograph, of Act II, Scene VII of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Shakepeare Memorial Theatre, 1953. Design by Motley.

The photograph of the opening scene shows an uncluttered, simple setting. The stage has been raised with six semi-circular steps across the length of each stage. There is a further range of six steps in the centre of the raised stage. Two white columns are positioned on either side of the first raised stage. A canopy falls behind the two columns, propped up by long wooden stakes. The rendering of the scene shows that the canopy is vivid yellow. Colour appears to have played an important role in distinguishing between scenes set in Egypt and those set in Rome, with costumes also reflecting this change of location. For Egypt, Harris' designs utilise blue and yellow and for Rome, grey is the dominant colour scheme.

In Act II, Scene IV, two members of the triumvirate, Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, meet together in Rome. Octavius Caesar shares the contents of a letter to Lepidus, which tells the story of Antony's frivolous and indulgent behaviour whilst in Egypt. In this scene, a large swagged curtain, held by an enormous eagle, hangs between the two pillars. Three Roman ornate stools are placed between the pillars, to represent the ruling triumvirate. Harris explains that the rear curtain was treated with plaster, so that it looked sculptured.[310] The visual effect of the grey sculptured curtain and the symmetry of the stage, presents Rome as dictatorial and authoritarian. In Act II, Scene VII the rostra that were upstage centre have now been moved to upstage right. A large curtain obscures most of stage left, stopping short of the repositioned steps. The curtain is ruched on either side to allow entrances down the steps. Here, Harris has used arrangements of fabric to indicate an interior setting.

[310] Mullin, p. 140.

Peter Fleming in *the Spectator* draws attention to the simplicity of the staging describing the production as 'swift, the set simple and attractive.'[311] A reviewer in the *Scotsman* comments:

> The play is not hampered by unnecessary décor […]The stage, save for a couple of slender pillars, is as bare as possible […] During most of these tense three hours the stage is bare except for a flight of shallow steps, and sometimes a simple figure or two figures at parley are sharply etched against the sky.[312]

Reviews of the 1946 and 1953 *Antony and Cleopatra* note Harris' use of simultaneity in design. The difference between the two productions is the way in which the 1953 production distils and refines symbolic motifs. The 1946 *Antony and Cleopatra* set rendering shows that Harris was attempting to create structures representing buildings, with such architectural features as arches, tiled flooring and a central building which is treated to look like stone. However, scenic pieces in the 1953 Antony are distilled to hints and inferences. The only permanent set pieces that remain on stage throughout are the stone steps and two fluted columns. The latter is a clever choice because these architectural forms appear in both Egyptian and Roman architecture and therefore can serve both locations in the play. Interiors and exteriors are indicated by defining space with colour and material. Light appeared to have played an important role in the scenes after the last interval,[313] with a cyclorama upon which light was projected to distinguish between Egyptian scenes and Roman scenes.

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[311] Peter Fleming, *Theatre: Antony and Cleopatra*, (review of 'Antony and Cleopatra' (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon) by Glen Byam-Shaw), (London, The Spectator, 13 November 1953).
[312] Unknown, *Antony and Cleopatra*, (review of 'Antony and Cleopatra' (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford Upon Avon) by Glen Byam-Shaw), (Edinburgh, The Scotsman, 30 April 1953).
[313] Mullin, p. 140.

Harris' designs are built around the movement of the actors' body in the stage space. The design distils symbolic motifs, that emerge from the reading of a text. The design does not dominate and is not the focus of the scene, as in Messel's designs, but it cedes to the text and the actors. Poetic realism in the 1953 production is neither naturalistic nor decorative, but embraces theatricalism, simplicity and distillation in order to communicate a poetic and symbolic truthfulness that emerges from the play text. The aesthetic of poetic realism that emerges from the play text at the heart of the design process, contributes to the final of the Motley principles I have identified, *that the designer and the design should serve the play.*

7. Chapter Four Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that social and cultural influences shaped the philosophy at the London Theatre Studio and the Old Vic Theatre. I have examined the aims and manifesto pledges of the London Theatre Studio and identified six Motley principles that emerge from this. Furthermore, I demonstrate that Motley reject decorative design because it disrupts unity, privileging visual dimensions of performance over the play text. The aesthetic of poetic realism that emerges, aims to work in harmony with other elements of production, using restraint, simplicity and simultaneity. The aesthetic is serious and poetic, rather than flamboyant and spectacular. The emphasis on unity in production repositions the designer as a creative collaborator/interpreter, professionalising the role of design and designer through education. Education formalises the skills and behaviours associated with design/scenography, and this provides the means by which identity agency is

consolidated and repeated through 'role enactment or identity performance'.[314] The notion of the ensemble changes the positionality of the designer to a more autonomous collaborator/interpreter but the role is not equal in the ensemble. Therefore, the aesthetic of poetic realism arises from designers ceding authorial agency to the text, the authorial imprimatur, in the director, and the performing body. This is a hierarchy of performance organisation, that brings relative visibility and power in the process of performance making.

Although all three Motleys were involved in teaching the design course at the London Theatre Studio, Harris led the design course through its various iterations once the London Theatre Studio closed. In the period between the closure of the Old Vic School and the establishment of the 'Sadler's Wells Design Course' in 1966,[315] Harris worked with Byam-Shaw at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and at the Royal Court Theatre. In 1981 the Motley course moved to the Riverside Theatre and then to the Almeida Theatre in 1987. In 1991, the course was resident for a brief time at the National Theatre. In 1992 the School moved into premises at Shelton Street, Covent Garden and then in 1994 into the Drury Lane Theatre workshops.[316] Harris stepped down from the role of sole course director in 1994, and died six years later, aged ninety five. The course was suspended in 2011, for reasons I shall examine in the next chapter, where I show how the principles I have identified were embedded in the curriculum and pedagogy of the Motley Theatre Design Course, and how this ultimately impacts upon the positionality and agency of the designer on the course. I will show that the designer was positioned in a

[314] Hitlin and Elder, p. 179.
[315] Unknown, 'News in Brief', *The Times*, 18 July 1966, p. 14.
[316] Mullin, p. 207.

hierarchy, ceding agency to the text, the director and the performing body.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECONSTRUCTING THE MOTLEY COURSE

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to reconstruct the pedagogy and curriculum of the Motley Theatre Design Course by analysing the outcomes of the focus group with Motley alumni. First, I introduce the objects chosen by focus group participants and explain how those objects contain 'punctum'. Then I present a thematic analysis of participant responses, organised using the six Motley principles I identified in the previous chapter. I demonstrate that the Motley principles that emerged from practices at the London Theatre Studio are embedded in the Motley course. I argue that Motley focus group participants' emphasise pedagogy rather than curriculum because pedagogy and curriculum were not separated on the Motley course. I show how the curriculum was embodied in Motley teachers through embodied pedagogy, where skills are taught and learned through the body, by demonstration and physical practice, and through folk pedagogy where a teacher's training and professional experiences are embedded in the teaching and conceptualisation of the emergent professional identities of learners on the Motley course. The curriculum was not 'written down' in course documents but experienced through the relational and social dimensions of studio practice. I conclude the chapter by addressing the research questions of the study. I propose that the Motley course, like that at the London Theatre Studio, positions designers in service to the text and the ensemble. I argue that professional agency is enabled through an extended professional network. However, authorial agency is constrained because the designer is required to cede identity to the play text and ensemble.

2. Objects and Punctum

In chapter three, I explained Barthes' notion of punctum, and how I apply this to objects, and their role in prompting memory and so I will briefly summarise this notion again here. Barthes explains that there are two dimensions to punctum; temporal and expansive. The temporal effect of punctum may be defined as the past (object) in the present moment; the 'noeme' (that-has been).[1] The expansive dimension of punctum arises from the intersection of the owner of the object with the object, 'beyond what is there' in the object. I extend the method of object elicitation to a focus group setting on the premise that 'biographical objects'[2] can be touched and sensed and therefore act as 'the vehicles to our memories'.[3] In the next section, I will show how the objects chosen by participants embody punctum.

[1] Barthes, p. 97.
[2] Albano, p. 17.
[3] Bell and Bell, p. 68.

2.1 Stephen's Object: An End of Year Motley Exhibition Flier

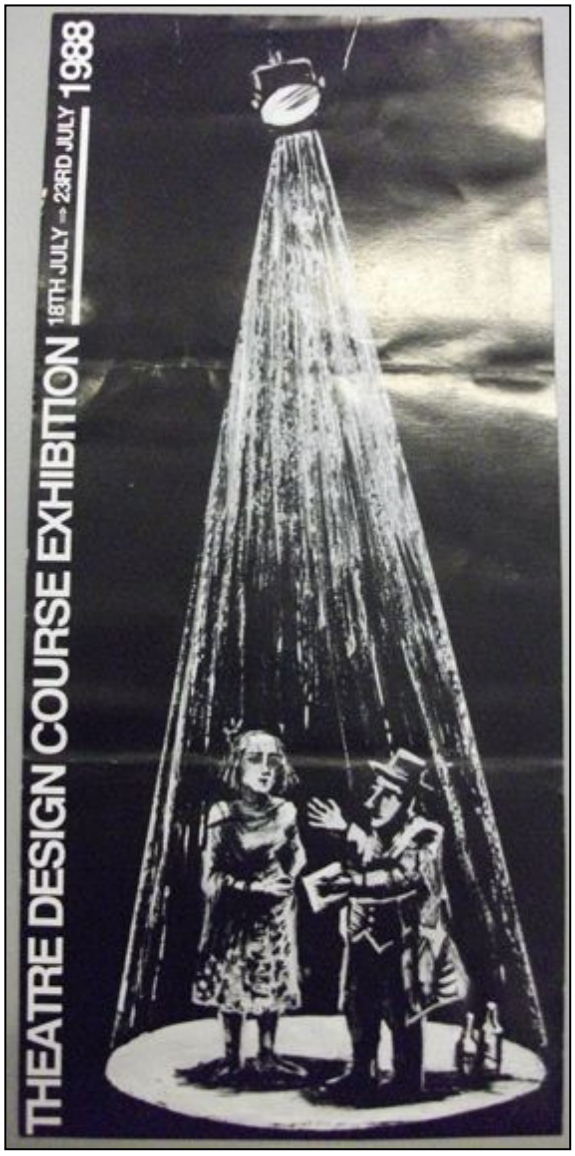

Figure xxv: Stephen's Object: A Motley Theatre Design Course Exhibition Flyer

Stephen's object is a flier for the end of year Motley exhibition. The exhibition was an important social event, with alumni invited to attend to meet past and present students. Stephen describes the object as:

> Letter format invitation card/flyer for the […] group exhibition. Printed images of the students' work - costume drawings. Printed names of all students in year group. Date of exhibition. Place. Professionally printed flyer.

For Stephen, the object symbolises being a student on the Motley course, and the time that has elapsed since the course. In his written description he notes the value of subsequent design work of peers on the course.[4] He also refers to the way the flier reminds him of how he has embedded the philosophy of Motley in his teaching; 'it highlighted the significance of a way of teaching'. Stephen's connection between his own teaching practices and that of Motley highlight the dimension of folk pedagogy that I introduced in the literature review in chapter two, where Bruner uses this term to describe the ways in which teacher's adopt and then pass on a pedagogic lineage. The object also functions as a 'graduation certificate', and I will examine this metonymic quality of the flier in more detail in part two of this chapter.

[4] Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object Elicitation Exercise

2.2 Linda's Object: A Silver Necklace

Figure xxvi: (From Top Right) Sarah's Object – An Engineer's Square; Linda's Object – A Sliver Necklace; Phillip's Object – A Small Plaster Head.

Linda's object is a silver necklace, given to her by a boyfriend. She describes the object:

> It is a silver necklace, designed by 'Wright and Teague'. It has large tube-like beads threaded onto a silver chain. The clasp is a snake-like hook and on this clasp is a silver heart. The hook should be worn at the back of the neck, but I like to wear it the wrong way round so that then little silver heart hangs at the front.

The object has associations with loss. The boyfriend who gave her the necklace, and father to her son, passed away in 2012. Linda associates the necklace with visiting Harris in Hammersmith Hospital shortly before Harris' death. Linda says of Harris, that 'She stretched her arm up and touched it [the necklace] briefly'.[5] The noeme of the necklace brings the past into the present that invokes a physical connection with Harris.

2.3 Sarah's Object: An Engineer's Square

Sarah's object is an engineer's square. This is a tool that is comprised of two pieces of metal, at right angles to one another. It is used to ensure a piece of wood or other material is square. She describes the square as:

> A small engineers steel square used for making and cutting right angles. It is a tool that I bought in my fist week at Motley and is the only tool I have still that I bought at that time. It is dirty and worn - covered in a patina of dirt, finger marks, soldering grease and there is a scratched teal blue circle of nail varnish on one end. Because all the students had all the same tools, we marked our particular tools in this way.

Sarah bought the object when she started the course and she uses the tool

[5] Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object Elicitation Exercise

every day. It has a small mark of blue nail varnish on it and she explains that she added this to avoid it becoming mixed up with tools belonging to others in the group.

> It has this dot of nail varnish on it because when we bought the same things, […] I thought, "Right, it's going to be my tool". So we […] colour coded each of our tools, so I know that that's the one from Motley.

The temporal quality of punctum is present in this description. Sarah recalls placing the dot of nail varnish on the object in the past, and this connects her present to the past moment of starting the course. The object also contains physical traces of Sarah's subsequent professional work as a designer, and in her written description of the object she describes the 'patina' that the tool has acquired over time: 'dirt, finger marks, soldering grease'.

2.4 Phillip's Object: Art Nouveau Female Head in Relief

Phillip's object is a small resin-cast head. He bought the object from a junk shop just before he began the Motley course. Phillip describes the object:

> A small female head in relief. Art Nouveau, Turn of 19th-20th Century style. Resin cast - fake ivory. Nice modelling, engaging expression. Large flowers around stylised head. About 5-6.5 cm in size, 2 cm deep.

Phillip explains that students on the Motley course were encouraged to bring objects with them to personalise their studio space. The object represents the importance of balancing 'one's own identity with that of the text'.

2.5 Hayley's Object: A Scale Ruler

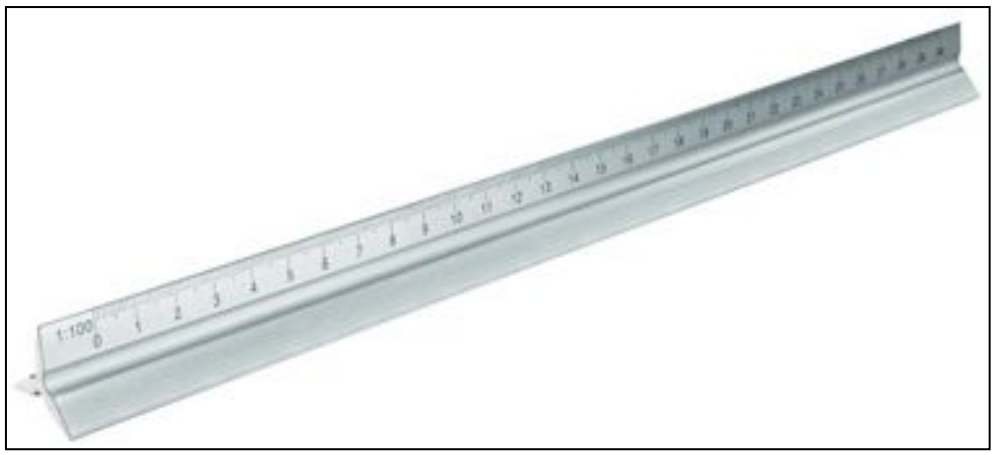

Figure xxvii: Hayley's Object - A Scale Ruler

A scale ruler is a tool used by designer/scenographers to draw to scale, and to measure scale in modelling. It is triangular with various units of length one each side. Hayley describes the object:

> A scale ruler. A plain one - with no colours marking the different scales. 1:25, 1:50 etc. It is shaped in a way you can turn it over for the different scales you use. It always looks to me like a Toblerone chocolate bar. It has small black lines to denote the measurements and numbers relate to each scale.

For Hayley, the object represents *being* a theatre designer. Hayley has moved away from 'theatre design' to create devised performance work. In her written description, she writes that she has a 'gold-sprayed one' that is passed between Hayley and a friend whenever they do design work. The ruler is also a metonymic object because it symbolises the profession of theatre design. Hayley explained that the ruler she had brought to the focus group was not the original one she had had at

Motley, although it was ‘my oldest one’, emphasising the expansive, rather than temporal dimension, of the object.

2.6 Hugh’s Object: Costume Drawing[6]

The object is a small costume drawing painted in gouache, on yellow paper. Hugh describes the object as:

> It is a costume design, by me, for Pulcinella, the ballet. It is drawn and painted on yellow paper, a fantastic background at the time, for me. It uses pen and ink and natural watercolour.

The object represents Hugh’s struggles between ‘enjoyment of the course [and] my complete inability to grasp the nature of costume patterns and their relationship to the human form.’ He remarks that he failed to retain many things from his time studying at Motley, and this is why he chose this particular object for the focus group. The object represents both temporal and expansive dimensions of punctum.

[6] A photograph of this object is not available because this would identify the artist, and hence the participant. Anonymity is a condition of ethical approval for this study.

2.7 Michael's Objects: The Calico 'Toile' and a Foyle's Bookshop Receipt

Figure xxviii: Michael's Objects: A Paper Bag Containing a Toile and a Foyles Bookshop Receipt.

Figure xxix: Michael's Objects: A Cotton Toile used in Costume Design

Michael presented the group with an old paper bag and then reached inside to reveal a cotton toile, used in costume making, and a Foyle's Bookshop receipt. Michael describes the object as:

> A calico toile for a sideless surcoat in a paper foiled bag. Two separate pieces of calico with markings in pen and pencil indicating balance marks etc. The two pieces are roughly L-shaped with a deep scooping shape around the armhole area. Smells quite damp. It is more than thirty years old.

The Foyle's Bookshop receipt reminded Michael of a teacher who taught 'The History of Theatre':

> [W]ith a receipt for a book and that book we reckon would have been for a play script which John Blatchley did the History of Theatre would have told us to get […] It would probably have been Chekov or Strindberg or something.

Michael associated the toile with Pegaret Anthony,[7] teacher of the 'History of Costume' at Motley. As the toile was taken out of the bag, the group reacted to the strong smell of dampness and decay with humour and revulsion. The object embodied noeme; it *smelled* of decay and the passing of time. The item had been in the bag since Michael left the Motley course, over thirty years ago:

> [I]t's quite old. It smells! [GROUP LAUGHS] and it's something that hasn't been out of this bag but on the other hand it's interesting because this is something I'd never done before I was on the course but it is something I'm involved with now […] it's, in a way, the start of the process which continues.

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[7] Pegaret Anthony was an official war artist during the Second World War, documenting the lives of factory workers. She went on to teach the 'History of Dress' at Central Saint Martin's College for over forty years, before teaching on the Motley course.
See: The Central Saint Martins Museum and Study Collection, 'Pegaret Anthony Archive: The Central Saint Martins Museum and Study Collection'
<http://collections.arts.ac.uk/view/people/asitem/items$0040:27?t:state:flow=d72e23da-e587-44cb-bf03-61f00235bb63>.

Michael explicitly endows the object with the ability to simultaneously represent the past, and the start of an experience, with subsequent experience and the present moment.

2.8 Summary: Objects and Punctum

There is evidence that the objects chosen by participants embody the temporal and expansive dimensions of punctum described by Barthes. For example, the calico toile, engineers square, costume design and resin head are objects that existed in the same space and time as the Motley course and embody the temporal aspect of punctum. The toile *smelled* of the past. Similarly, the patina on the engineer's square shows the passing of time. Phillip suggested that the group would sense the significance of his object by holding it so that we could feel the 'weight' of it. Linda's object was particularly poignant. The explanation that Harris had touched the necklace evoked an imagined physical connection to Harris. In contrast, Hayley's object did not exist when she was on the Motley course, and, perhaps because of this, prompted more expansive notions about what it meant to be a designer and to do design. In the final stage of the process, participants shared their objects and discussions, and in the next part of this chapter, I analyse their responses in the light of the Motley principles that I defined in chapter four.

3. Focus Group Analysis: Six Motley Principles

3.1 Principle One: Education Should be Enmeshed with a Professional Network

The Motley course was embedded in professional theatre. Harris relied upon

a professional network to provide teachers, financial support and to support the transition of graduates into professional practice. The close proximity of the course to professional practice is embedded in the tacit and implicit dimensions of pedagogy, and the hidden curriculum of the Motley course.

3.1.1 Informal Learning Contexts and Embodied Pedagogy

There are two examples of the taught curriculum on the course; the 'History of Costume' and 'History of Theatre' classes:

> Actually, the 'History of Costume' was quite a rare thing on Motley, that was the one course that you were […] taught information. Other than that, everything was taught through practice.

> The only one that I had that wasn't hands on was the 'History of Theatre' which we had on a regular basis but it wasn't nearly as structured as what Pegaret [Antony] and then what Ann [Curtis] did.

These were the only references made to a taught curriculum. Participants focused upon their memories of pedagogy, or *how* something is taught, and by *whom*. From this response, I suggest that the approach to teaching and learning was 'embodied in the experiences and practices of teacher/practitioners'.[8] As Stephen comments: 'The notes were there through them [teachers] rather than a printed handout.' The course did not distinguish theory and practice, and therefore embodied the spirit of Saint-Denis' combined school and company. The ensemble atmosphere was substituted with an extended professional network of directors and designers. Many teachers gave their time for free, or a very low fee, whilst premises were provided for a peppercorn rent. The course was not formally validated, as

[8] Mock and Way, p. 201.

Linda observes, ‘it was unregistered and everything else’. Sarah studied on the course more recently than the others, and she notes the contrast with her previous educational experiences, observing that ‘Motley was quite a change of direction - I’d come from a much more academic place’.

In 2011, the Motley course closed, with an article in *The Stage* announcing the closure. The article reports that the Chair of Motley Trustees, John Simpson, explained that the course was closing due to a lack of finances, and changes to visa regulations,[9] and I will consider the impact of these changes on Motley in just a moment. Similar reasons are given in a letter from the course convenors Alison Chitty, Ashley Martin-Davis and Catrin Martin to Motley alumni. They cite Government requirements for validation brought about by changes to immigration legislation, and the ‘endless quest for funds’ as factors in the course closure, concluding that ‘it is now impossible to maintain Percy’s [Harris’] philosophy of teaching at Motley’.[10] It is unclear what this statement refers to, but it may be a reference to Harris’ reluctance to document the course formally and this may have contributed to the closure of the course. There is a tension here between technicist models of education, and the social constructivist models apparent on the Motley course because, as I have demonstrated, Motley did not prepare course documentation or teach and assess a formal curriculum. Systems of accountability were required as part of the changes to visa regulations introduced by Theresa May, the then Home Secretary for the UK Coalition Government in 2011. From April

[9] Smith, p. 4.
[10] Alison Chitty, Ashley Martin-Davis, and Catrin Martin, ‘Statement from Alison Chitty, Ashley Martin-Davis and Catrin Martin (29/11/10)’, *Motley Alumni Website*, 2010 <https://motleyalumni.wordpress.com/statement-from-alison-chitty/> [accessed 15 February 2017].

2012, education institutions offering places to overseas students were required to register as 'highly trusted sponsors'. By registering, institutions would be subject to quality assurance mechanisms, that would account for the learning on the course, like programme and module specifications. Courses would be subject to inspection by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) by the end of that year. The policy was framed as a means to 'control immigration' and 'protect legitimate students from poor quality colleges'.[11] Motley could have affiliated with an approved HEI and this would have permitted them to continue. Prior to the early 1990s, British Conservatoires were not affiliated to any British Universities.[12] However, Motley would have been required to demonstrate that the course met the requirements of the QAA Quality Code, including 'documentation of programmes, teaching and assessment of learning outcomes and transparent assessment processes'.[13]

Linda describes the prospect of regulatory oversight at Motley as 'jumping through hoops', with Stephen suggesting that small institutions that had affiliated with HEI's, had 'lost their identity in the process' and that 'The Government now won't allow such a school [like Motley] to exist'. The lack of regulatory oversight at Motley is perceived by the participants as a good thing, because there were opportunities for chance encounters with professional practitioners, that would otherwise be difficult to accommodate:

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[11] UK Government: Home Office, 'Major Changes to Student Visa System' (Home Office, 2011) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-changes-to-student-visa-system> [accessed 11 October 2018].
[12] Radosavljević, p. 11.
[13] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 'Part A : Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards', *Quality Code*, 2018 <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code> [accessed 1 May 2018].

> [T]hat seemed to be the thing about Motley from the beginning […] that it remained free of any kind of duress from above - or administrative duress - or having to tick boxes […] Advantage could be taken immediately of Samuel Beckett being in the building, so we could actually talk to him or Edward Bond or Danny Boyle […] that can't be planned, it can't be planned a year in advance.

The value of the course, according to Hayley is because it was concerned with learning, rather than *qualifying*:

> I think that's what made it so remarkable as well. You thought you were a part of something that was unique because you didn't get a piece of paper and for me, that was the best thing […] It still breaks my heart that it's not there because it was the only educational situation where it was about learning, not about what you got [Group: "yeah", "agreed"] and I think the fact we don't have that any more is heart breaking [Group: "yes", "I know what you mean"]

I will consider Hayley's comments in the context of definitions of informal and formal education, and how these distinctions emerged from a particular policy context in education since the 1960s that sought to align education with economics.

Distinctions between formal and informal learning are contested. They are presented as a duality,[14] with accredited learning on the one hand, and learning that takes place outside educational institutions on the other. The reductive distinction appears to have been shaped by a policy landscape that is concerned with the alignment of education with Western globalised economies.[15] For example, in 1968, Coombs argues in *The World Educational Crisis*[16] that education systems were

[14] Phil Hodkinson, 'Informal Learning: A Contested Concept', in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. by Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker, and Barry McGaw, 3rd edn (London: Elsevier, 2010), pp. 42–46 (p. 42).
[15] Susan L. Robertson, 'Re-Imagining and Rescripting the Future of Education: Global Knowledge Economy Discourses and the Challenge to Education Systems', *Comparative Education*, 41.2 (2005), 151–70 (p. 151).
[16] Philip H Coombs, *The World Educational Crisis: A Systems Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 20.

turning out 'the wrong 'mix' of manpower' for modern economies.[17] Coombs proposes that measurement provides one way in which 'input' might be aligned with 'output'; 'How much have they learned, how well and how fast?'.[18] He argues for standardisation through quality assurance mechanisms, so that higher education can better meet economic needs. The notion of formal learning arises from this policy landscape is learning that takes place 'intentionally within educational institutions',[19] and is quality assured, validated, standardised and measured. Halliday proposes that formal learning is perceived as 'economically efficient' because learning outcomes and assessment may be controlled, and quality standards provide an accountability mechanism for public funding. However, the consequence of this is that formal learning is perceived as both 'acquired' and 'rational'.[20] By contrast, Hodkinson argues that informal learning is 'embodied' and 'situated', involving the practical and affective, as well as cognitive, domains.[21]

Participants emphasised the affective dimensions of their experiences on the course. For example, Phillip describes feelings of being 'very, very safe' and that there was a balance between 'feeling safe and free and feeling that one's own individuality was going to be honoured [and] respected'. The informal learning environment appears to create the conditions in which honesty and authenticity are valued; 'The people who were guiding us cared enough about us to perhaps be quite cross if we bullshitted'. Failure on the Motley course was treated as a part of

[17] Coombs, p. 165.
[18] Coombs, p. 105.
[19] John Halliday, 'Lifelong Learning', in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. by Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker, and Barry McGaw (London: Elsevier Inc., 2010), pp. 170–74 (p. 173).
[20] Halliday, p. 173.
[21] Hodkinson, p. 44.

learning, with Hayley explaining that 'You were allowed to be human […] you were allowed to walk out and cry […] but then you were brought, by Percy, very seriously back to "Ok, now get on with it". Failure appears to have been treated as a necessary and important dimension of learning, with students and staff engaged in relational and dialogic modes of learning.

The informal context of the course explains why the flier is so important to Stephen. In the absence of a formal certificate, it provides proof that he 'graduated' from the course. Although the course was not validated, Stephen recalls that he received a grant for the Motley course from the Greater London Council (GLC), under the leadership of Ken Livingstone, a prospect that would not be possible today. Therefore, the value of the course is the connection to networks of professional practice, facilitated through the end of year exhibition. The exhibition gave Motley alumni the opportunity to meet and affirm professional connections, and Phillip expresses sadness at the loss of the exhibition:

> It's more difficult now that there aren't yearly [Motley] exhibitions. That's such a chaos in a sense. You want to see the students' work […] and sometimes you don't really want to see the students' work, you just want to meet people who you haven't met for a while.

3.1.2 Experiential Learning and Place-Based Pedagogy

Earlier in this chapter, I explained that professional theatre practitioners contributed to teaching on the Motley course. The approach to experiential learning simulated professional practice, with some concessions. For example, rather than the standard four-week professional production turn-around times, students were given six-week practice-based projects. Linda describes a typical day on the course:

> Very like a sort of working day in that you might have a deadline in two days, or it might be two days for a 'crit' but somebody was

> swinging by the studio so they were going to come in a talk to you and you'd all have to stop and have that meeting […] because that person was there, and then you'd go back to what you thought you had to be doing.

Students could remain in the studio until late in the evening, and the last person leaving the studio was responsible for locking up. Stephen describes the studio as 'a place where you could live or sleep twenty-four hours a day and Sunday too'. Education and professional practice were integrated, as Linda observes:

> [I]t felt very real and so every project was based in the Royal Court which you could visit, you'd get plans, the Edinburgh Lyceum, the Cottesloe and you'd go and the directors that were working there were coming to see us […] We had Danny Boyle for a project, one year, which was absolutely fantastic and so it felt very real rather than little fake projects.

Hugh comments: 'It was just a working studio. It wasn't an educational establishment'. The place-based pedagogy of the studio mirrors and models professional practices, whilst providing a sense of security and social community for students.

Prompted by Michael's recollections of Pegaret Antony, Sarah explains that she was not taught by Anthony because she graduated from the course in more recent years. However, she recalls Anthony's 'phenomenal slide collection' and that this had been continued by her successor, Ann Curtis. Buruma observes that Anthony was one of the first to show slides at her lectures. Anthony had catalogued a collection of slides at the V&A and in return she was given eight hundred of them.[22] Michael, Stephen and Hayley recollect that Elizabeth Montgomery maintained the library by 'cutting and pasting' images into volumes and

[22] Anna Buruma, 'Pegaret Anthony 1915-2000', *Costume*, 35.1 (2000), 152–56 (p. 154).

maintaining the books. Stephen describes Montgomery's role as 'a really special official archivist'. Participants refer to visiting teachers on the course such as Hayden Griffin,[23] William Gaskill,[24] Jane Howell,[25] John Blatchley,[26] Alison Chitty,[27] Peter Hartwell,[28] David Toguri,[29] Danny Boyle,[30] and Jocelyn Herbert, who was amongst the first graduates from the design course at the London Theatre Studio.[31] Stephen says that there was an atmosphere of people dropping by at the Motley studio, reminiscent of accounts of their studio in the 1930s:

> [W]hen they were working down the ENO and they had the studio space and all sorts of people popped in where they were working […] it was much like how they probably practised themselves.

The emphasis on professional practice shaped approaches to assessment and feedback on the course. Phillip observes that 'everything [was] in personal, verbal feedback' that was 'written in stone […] because it was shared as a group'. Learning is conceptualised as social and experiential, with the studio as the social focus for learning; dimensions associated with social constructivist models of

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[23] Keith Dewhurst, 'Hayden Griffin Obituary Imaginative Stage Designer Known for His Work at the Royal Court and the National', *The Guardian Online*, 1 April 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/apr/01/hayden-griffin London> [accessed 18 March 2018].
[24] Robert Rubens, 'Conversations at the Royal Court Theatre: With William Gaskill and John Dexter', *The Transatlantic Review*, 8.Winter (1961), 135–42.
[25] Elizabeth Schafer, 'Jane Howell', in *Ms-Directing Shakespeare* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 19–23..
[26] Elizabeth Forbes, 'Obituary: John Blatchley', *The Independent*, 14 September 1994 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-john-blatchley-1448690.html> [accessed 18 March 2018].
[27] Imogen Russell Williams, 'Theatre Masterclass: Alison Chitty', *The Guardian*, 14 July 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/jul/14/theatre-masterclass-alison-chitty> [accessed 18 March 2018].
[28] Michael Posner, 'Leftover Props and Live Pigs', *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 24 May 2008) <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/the-theory-of-design-leftover-props-and-live-pigs/article673330/> [accessed 12 March 2018].
[29] Alan Strachan, 'Obituary David Toguri', *The Independent*, 6 December 1997 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-david-toguri-1287171.html> [accessed 18 March 2018].
[30] Danny Boyle, 'Danny Boyle', *Sight and Sound*, 23.4 (2013), 60–67.
[31] Jocelyn Herbert, *Jocelyn Herbert: A Theatre Workbook*, ed. by Cathy Courtney (London: Art Books International, 1993), p. 15.

education.

Motley teachers would question a student about their design work in front of other students in a 'crit'. As I explained in chapter two, the 'crit' has been identified as a signature pedagogy in both theatre and performance, and art and design education. Hayley recalls feeling 'terror' anticipating the feedback, but Linda explains that they respected the rigor of this process. Saint-Denis describes a tradition that started at the Old Vic School where each student was put through 'The Test', in front of other students, in order to assess progress; 'It was like throwing a dog into the water, knowing it will never drown but in order to see how well it swims'.[32] Students on the Motley course appeared to have experienced something similar through 'crits'. Student work was certainly subject to scrutiny. Stephen recalls Harris' use of a 'single spyglass […] a little binocular' when assessing design in live performance. Stephen says that the work-based, real-world context of the learning meant that the feedback was focused on the job at hand, and on the function of the design in relation to the performance as a whole:

> There's no need to be generous, there's a job to be done and so let's not waffle on about things. Let's just go right to what's wrong so that this design serves a purpose. We have got to serve the purpose.

Hayley explains that this facilitated a smooth transition into professional practice, by 'learning what it was going to be like in the outdoors'.

3.1.3 The Motley Legacy and the Professional Network

Participants reflect upon the recruitment and selection procedure for the

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[32] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 98.

course. The course attracted high numbers of applicants, and ten students were recruited to each year group. Phillip expresses positive feelings about his experience and says, 'It fuelled me totally for that year and a few years afterwards and not a feeling that I was privileged but just, yeah, that I'd been chosen'. The prestige of being 'chosen' brought mixed feelings for some, particularly for those who attended the course more recently, with Sarah describing the reputation of the course as a 'potential burden', and Stephen recalling the 'tremendous weight' of the 'lineage' associated with the course. Linda articulates what she perceives as the pressure on new recruits:

> We've chosen you because we believe you can do this and want you to do it and we're going to invest all of this in you and you now need to live up to everything that you can.

Participants explain that a unique feature of the Motley course was that applicants were not required to have a theatre or design background but were asked to prepare a portfolio and some theatre design work and that they should be ready to discuss it in an interview. Hayley reflects upon the diverse backgrounds of those who were chosen:

> What was also special about Motley was the fact you didn't have to come from a theatre background and therefore the choices that they made in the students that they took was completely unique and when we turned up on that first day and we met everybody we all discovered that we all came from completely different worlds and that, I think, was absolutely crucial.

However, there may have been changes to the entry requirements in later years of the course. The Motley website indicates that there was the expectation that applicants would have had some previous theatre experience and those who

had not could be asked to complete a 'special project'.[33] Michael says that applicants were selected if they were 'people who could be designers, rather than people who had reached a certain level of […] ability to do a course'. It seems that the selection process was concerned more with assessing an applicant's creative potential, based on their individual experiences, than to measure the applicants against a set of standards in theatre design. The philosophy is reminiscent of a constructivist model of education, although Motley almost certainly would not have described their approach in this way.

In the next part of this chapter, I will analyse focus group participant responses in relation to the second and third Motley principles.

3.2 Principles Two and Three: Costumes and Design should Accommodate […] the Movement of Body in Space

Participants emphasise the importance of three-dimensions in design and the understanding of movement in space. For example, Phillip comments:

> [I]t's also about that which is the three dimensional, looking at all sides when you're making something which is hard to do in a two-dimensional drawing, you can do the back view but you can't really in 2D. You can master the drawing. You can see things sculpturally on the page and that's the most immediate way to tell.

Stephen explains that costume design was taught by 'draping' material on a mannequin or real person, to achieve the right shape for period costume. He makes a distinction between 'makers of costume' and 'designers of costume', emphasising the importance of the period cut, rather than pattern cutting. As a designer, he

[33] Motley, 'Motley Theatre Design Course', 2011 <http://www.motleytheatredesign.co.uk/> [accessed 7 November 2018].

explains, ‘the period on the mannequin was the most immediate way and still is in this business where you spend a lot of your hours on the mannequin, draping and preparing for the makers in the morning and sticking together.’ Hugh’s object of the costume design reminds him of the difficulties he experienced in attempting to transpose the three-dimensional body into two-dimensional pattern cutting. The process of costume design was embodied, with tools and techniques learned and practised through three-dimensional materiality.

An unexpected aspect of the philosophy of the Motley course concerned the temporal dimension of performance. Students were introduced to the storyboard which Michael describes as the ‘revelation’ that ‘[theatre design] is all about how things change as much as things are’. Hayley explains that the temporal and dynamic nature of design arises from narrative:

> Rather than prescribing something for the whole play. It’s really about the moment to moment of the narrative and then how that shifts rather than prescribing a design to the overall play and hoping it is just going to be able to work […] the whole sense of time, a fifth dimension in the work.

Stephen stresses the dimension of anticipation in design, but that exposure to performance is important in developing the skill of anticipation:

> You can more easily anticipate a performance, the more you have experienced yourself and younger students haven’t got that. The lucky thing is at Riverside we were surrounded by such a wealth of performance that we could walk in and out and having that access was […] I think the real, in a sense, the meat and potatoes of what we were trying to do.

Participants did not explain how design was taught and role of design in accommodating bodies and movement, perhaps because the objects chosen by them did not prompt any recollections about this. However, participants agree that the

core skill they did learn through the course was resourcefulness and independence, as Michael says:

> [E]ven if there was something you didn't learn there, you have got the core foundation as to how you might find something out later when you do need to research something for a show.

This comment leads me to the fourth Motley principle; *that designers should be equipped to respond creatively to limited financial resources.*

3.3 Principle Four: Designers Should […] Respond Creatively to Limited Financial Resources

In one exchange, participants describe the Motley course as 'shoestring':

INTERVIEWER	Was that something you were aware of when you were on the course – the absence of cash, perhaps? Slightly precarious?
HUGH	Either in terms of individuals who were struggling to keep up […] I can't think of the word for it?
MICHAEL	Shoestring!
GROUP	[Yes! That's it!]
HUGH	That wasn't a negative though that's just how it was, and I think everyone was very sensitive to it and so you weren't hidden from it. You all shared that.

The Motley theatre course relied upon professional and alumni networks for donations of materials or funding, as Phillip observes:

> [M]agically there was enough and actually more than enough to go

> round sometimes, cardboard, bits of wood […] Percy had connections […] because of the loyalty of her past students who were always donating things and […] amounts of money that came from sources which we were never really told about.

Participants' descriptions of working with donated materials highlights a tacit dimension of pedagogy that is concerned with resilience and 'getting on with the job'. These tacit dimensions are an example of folk pedagogy, where the axiological values associated with professional practice are embedded in teaching and learning; perhaps reflecting the time and finance constraints of production turnaround times in professional theatre. For example, a discussion that emerges in response to the tools bought to the focus group by Sarah and Hayley is about particular brand of scalpel blade, '10A Swann-Morton', and tips for sharpening and extending the life of the blades. This then leads to a discussion of a particular card that was very thick and difficult to cut, revealing embodied ways of knowing:

HAYLEY	That thing I remember looking at it and going "what do I do with this"? and it was so thick [card], so they must have given it to us, yeah.
LINDA	Oh yes! That was the worst card.
MICHAEL	It was like packing board or something like that!
PHILLIP	It was like recycled grey card.
STEPHEN	Something similar was supplied to my students ten years ago and it reminded me of how painful it was over time and especially when you're just getting your fingers prepared for. It takes probably about three months of cutting to get your fingers toughened up a bit really […] and you can see this is really hard on people that are cutting for the first time.
PHILLIP	Oh yes, you can only do it with a very sharp Stanley knife.

The notion of physical resilience extends to the premises that housed the Motley course. As I have already noted, Motley relied upon the professional network to provide premises for the course, usually at peppercorn rents. However, the resources were not always available to heat the premises. Participants discuss the cold they experienced when Motley was based at Shelton Street, Drury Lane and Riverside. Stephen explains that the spaces were large and difficult to heat, but Hayley suggests, 'It sets you up for life' and says, with some irony, that it prepared them for not being able to 'afford to heat your own studio'. The implication here is that straitened circumstances are to be expected, and to be endured, if one embarks on a career as a designer. Similarly, Stephen describes Harris as 'tough and resilient' and it appears that this extended into the tacit, and embodied pedagogic relations of the course; the students were being *physically* prepared for being a designer through cold environmental conditions, and through learning physically painful and difficult techniques such as cutting a particular kind of card. I shall move on now to consider the next Motley principle, that *design and designers should be integrated with other aspects of production in an ensemble.*

3.4 Principle Five: Design and Designers Should be Integrated with an Ensemble.

The Motley course did not simulate Saint-Denis' idea of the ensemble, but the notion of an ensemble-like identity was fostered in other ways. For example, Harris insisted upon students working in the shared studio space, Linda says:

> One of the rules was that you had to work in the studio, you weren't allowed to work at home because it was that everybody did it communally and everybody learned from each other.

Hugh welcomed this atmosphere, because 'everyone was pushing in the same direction'. However, Hayley suggests that this did not reflect her subsequent experiences of freelance design work:

> I miss that extraordinary, you know, having been to Art School, where it was a big studio and then going to Motley where there was a big studio that when you became a freelance designer you suddenly thought "Where is everybody?"

Harris continued the practice of group numbering, started by Saint-Denis at the London Theatre Studio, as a way of fostering a group identity. In Stephen's written description of his object, the exhibition flier, he emphasises the significance of being associated with a particular group.[34] Participants discuss sharing lunch around 'the lunch table' which doubled as a cutting table. For later years of the course, this was a particular table in a cafe. The lunch table served as a way of 'bringing people together'. The sense gained from these discussions was that students spent work and leisure time together, forming strong bonds with one another, emphasising the social and relational dimensions of the course.

So far, I have examined aspects of curriculum and pedagogy associated with the Motley course. In the next part, I consider how Harris' notion of poetic realism, was realised in the philosophy of the course, through the final Motley principle that *designer and design should serve the play.*

3.5 Principle Six: Designer and Design Should Serve the Play

In part one of this chapter, I explained that Phillip's object was a small resin-

[34] Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object Elicitation Exercise

cast Art Nouveau head. He decided to take the object to put in his studio space 'to preserve my own character because I was very afraid of losing my identity in a group'. The object prompted an extended discussion about self and group identity and the visibility of the designer in the process of designing. Phillip says he chose the object because it represented the process of design. He describes this as a balancing act between being 'personal, totally personal but also not being too personal'. Two of the participants referred to text in their written responses. With Hugh highlighting 'The importance of the narrative/text in the design process, and its application across media' and Hayley commenting that:

> Percy said it was all about the text. Start with the text […] I believe in narratives as a base for all my work that probably comes from Percy - it is all about the text.

Michael stresses that when the course was at the Riverside Theatre, students were exposed to lots of different kinds of performance, contrasting Bill Gaskill, whom he describes as 'a text-based director', with Romanian dramaturgs who came from 'a very expressionistic tradition completely different'. The emphasis on the play text reflects the philosophy at the London Theatre Studio that puts the play at the centre of the ensemble. However, some participants offer more expansive conceptualisations. For example, Hayley says that the word 'play' is too restrictive because it excludes some forms of performance. The play provides 'structure' for narrative, with Michael describing this a 'framework'. Hayley insists that Harris 'never indoctrinated us with a particular genre or a particular […] method or technical way of doing things'. They use different terminology to try and express a more expansive idea, for example, 'text', 'kernel' and 'the remit'. Hayley, whose specific interest is site-specific devised performance, explains that the approach she

learned on the Motley course, continues to guide her practice, but it is not restricted to text:

> [A]s long as the narrative drives it otherwise it's just abstraction and I'm not particularly interested in abstraction for its own sake. That comes from Percy.

Linda talks about the challenges associated with getting the balance right between text and design:

> I heard her [Harris'] voice in my head yesterday about being true to the text which was her big thing and I was choosing some colours and I thought "Oh, I'm pushing my own design on to this" and I had her voice going "Just look at the text! The answer's in the text!" So, I thought, "Ok, I'll look at the text"!

Participants describe the design process as 'extruding from the thing [the text] the truth' and that it is the job of the designer to avoid 'plonking your design on top of something'. In one exchange they explicitly reject 'decoration':

SARAH	Or not being extraneous. It's about what's necessary and what is serving.
HAYLEY	No decoration.
SARAH	Yes, no decoration.

Therefore, the philosophy of design taught at Motley is concerned with learning how to balance self and narrative. The designer should construe the 'truth' of a narrative, without imposing or adding anything, or by indulging in decoration. This suggests that a necessary condition for poetic realism is to cede aspects of identity. Harris' criticisms of the theatre work of David Hockney and Barbara Hepworth reveal her view about the relative visibility of a designer in their work:

> I think that he [Hockney] is brilliant, and I think that when he designs for the theatre, he is also brilliant, but a bit too brilliant. I think he

> counts more than a designer should.[35]

> [It was] a wire sculpture, which was very difficult to interpret as anything, but just Barbara Hepworth's wire sculpture.[36]

This suggests that Harris believes that an artist's signature style may prevent them from being an effective designer. The artefacts created by these artists have an identity, and a creator, beyond the world of the narrative. As Rebellato observes about the decorative designers of the 1930s, 'The prominence of the designer's text was largely to do with the fact that designers had reputations outside the theatre'.[37] However, Harris stresses that the balance between self and text does not imply submissiveness or subordination. She describes the personal qualities designers need for successful collaborations:

> [I]f they're not satisfactory people, they can't co-operate with all the people they have to co-operate with, and they can't, they can't deal with the situation, which is very complex. They have to be somebody who has a strong personality, and who has a strong vision of what they want to do, and the strength to get it carried through.[38]

As I have shown elsewhere in this thesis, Harris says that rejection of decoration is a recognisable feature of the work of graduates of the Motley Design Course.[39] As Madoff observes about schools of art; 'No school is a school without an idea. Every school embodies an inheritance at least, and at most is an invention rising out of its inheritance'.[40] Participants had a remarkably similar experience of the philosophy of the course, despite having studied on the course over a fifty-year

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[35] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney*, 30 January 1992.
[36] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 18 February 1992.
[37] Rebellato, p. 96.
[38] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24th March 1992.
[39] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 11th August 1992.
[40] Steven Henry Madoff, *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* (London: MIT Press, 2009), p. 1.

period, and after Harris' death. Sarah, the most recent graduate of the course observes:

> [W]hat's really interesting is the incredible continuation of that. What Percy said is exactly what [Course Director] said […] I always knew that [Course Director] feels that huge weight of responsibility to continue it but that's, for me that's kind of the proof because actually it's the same […] philosophy.

In chapter two, I introduced the notion of axiological aspects of folk pedagogy. Bruner's notion of folk pedagogy describes the underlying assumptions that an educator has about the purpose and process of learning in a particular context, 'a choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learning process and the learner. Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that caries its own message'.[41] The medium of the Motley course was to embed the trainee designer in a professional network and ensemble, as a trainee professional designer. The message carried by the medium was that designers should cede one's identity as an artist. This means not drawing attention to the decorative, spectacular potentiality of the visual in performance, as this draws attention to the artist.

4. Chapter Five Conclusion

4.1 Pedagogy and Curriculum

During the first stage of analysis I was concerned that the interview did not reveal much about the curriculum of the course, and that participants focused on pedagogy. However, it may be that the conceptual separation of these dimensions of education, is shaped by the policy landscape that distinguishes formal from

[41] Bruner, p. 63.

informal learning. As Hodkinson observes:

> Western policymakers often implicitly adopt an extreme and oversimplified version of learning as acquisition, which sees what is learned as a commodity […] there is a tendency to see learning processes and learning outcomes as separate – with one leading to the other.[42]

The curriculum cannot be separated from pedagogy in the Motley course because knowledge is unified with the person using and applying the knowledge. The signature pedagogies that emerge from the course include folk, embodied, relational and place-based pedagogies. The teaching was embodied through the practices and physical presence of the teachers and professionals in the studio environment. This created moments of unplanned learning for students. It seems that embodied pedagogy is a feature of informal learning contexts, where there is an absence of regulatory oversight. Furthermore, embodied pedagogy brings a new set of relations between students and their teachers. Students work in professional and simulated professional contexts, experiencing both the social consequences of failure (for the production and for the ensemble), with individual failure framed as an important dimension of learning. An enduring memory of the focus group is how Motley teachers and 'graduates' developed long-term relationships, once the course had ended. This was exemplified in Linda's choice of the necklace, suggesting strong relational dimensions to Harris' pedagogy. I will now reflect upon the method of object elicitation and how this contributed to the creation of this case study.

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[42] Hodkinson, p. 44.

4.2 Punctum and Object Elicitation

The experience of object elicitation in narrative inquiry was that they facilitate diverse and rich accounts. The objects did not just prompt recollection but appeared to contain and hold those memories. As Beckstead *et al*. suggest, 'Memory is not only 'stored in brains' but also in artefacts'.[43] Barthes notion of punctum in photographs, that I have transposed to objects, provides a way to theorise the connection between materiality and memory, and provides the rationale for why objects are an effective method for retrieving memory. The object becomes a substitute for both the speaking subject and the feelings and memories associated with a subject's narrative. The displacement onto/into the object created an atmosphere of trust and intimacy, that mitigated any potentiality for mistrust from the participants, given my outsider-researcher position.

4.3 Positionality, Agency and Pedagogy on the Motley Course

Through the London Theatre Studio and the Old Vic Theatre School, Motley were positioned in a professional context and network as part of, and serving, a hierarchical ensemble. This context contributed towards an 'ensemblier'[44] identity, that shaped their engagement with the process of designing and their emerging professional identities as theatre designers. The professional network explicitly facilitates and enables the professional agency of Motley alumni, supporting transitions to professional practice and sustaining professional identities in the long-term. Motley taught an approach to design that balances the designer's identity as

[43] Beckstead and others, p. 195.
[44] Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, p. 92.

a ‘generative artist’[45] with the text or narrative. The Motley course stresses that it is the job of a designer, in collaboration with others, to construe the ‘truth’ of a text, without imposing aspects of their creative identity and resisting extraneous detail, embellishment and decoration. In this way, designers cede authorial agency to the text and the performance hierarchy, and instead exercise proxy agency,[46] through professional networks, or in the context of the ensemble. Harris’ selection criteria for the course reflect some of the qualities she was looking for in a designer:

> We seldom take anybody who is more interested in the elaboration and visual side of it. And a lot of it is in the personality. One requires generosity, sincerity, and dedication.[47]

The designer requires ‘generosity’ to function in the collective machine, ‘sincerity’ in their approach to realising the text and ‘dedication’ to service in the ensemble. The aesthetic outcome of this attitude and approach, as evident in the Motley design aesthetic, is poetic realism. There is evidence of signature pedagogies on the Motley course. The curriculum and pedagogy of the course was embodied in the teachers. Furthermore, place-based, folk and relational pedagogies on the Motley course play an important role in conceptualising, and shaping professional identity and supporting the transitions of Motley alumni into a professional network.

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[45] Isackes, ‘Rethinking The Pedagogy Of Performance Collaboration: Two Case Studies That Assert Authorial Agency In Scenographic Education’, p. 2.
[46] Bandura, ‘On the Functional Properties of Perceived Self-Efficacy Revisited’, p. 12.
[47] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 24 March 1992.

CHAPTER SIX: DESIGN/SCENOGRAPHY IN AN EXPANDING FIELD

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe, evaluate and analyse interviews with course leaders of current design/scenography courses. The analysis is presented in two parts. As I explained in chapter three, Clandinin and Huber suggest that the main challenge of narrative inquiry is resisting the temptation to dissect narratives.[1] Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I summarise each narrative, paying attention to temporality and place. Temporality in narrative inquiry recognises that 'events, people, and objects under study are in temporal transition'.[2] Place refers to the physical location where the interview takes place, and how this informs the narrative that emerges.[3] This part of the chapter *documents* and *describes* pedagogies and curricula.

In the second part of this chapter, the thematic analysis of narratives is guided by Clandinin and Huber's concept of sociality. Narratives are socially and culturally located, and analysis should consider the social, cultural and institutional narratives in which individual's experiences are situated.[4] Through thematic analysis, I identify factors that shape current design/scenography education. I argue that these factors are situated within the context of neoliberal governance mechanisms introduced through UK Government higher education and arts funding policies, that emphasise 'the significance of contractual relations in the marketplace'.[5] I propose that neoliberalism constitutes precarious subjectivities of students in higher education, and professional designer/scenographers, through processes of 'social

[1] Clandinin and Huber, p. 439.
[2] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 73.
[3] Clandinin and Rosiek, p. 70.
[4] Clandinin and Huber, p. 436.
[5] Harvey, p. 3.

insecurity, flexibility and continuous fear arising from the loss of stability'.[6] The impact of precarity is apparent in the ways that designer agency is expressed and enacted in pedagogies and curricula in this small-scale study.

Ball warns against using the term 'neoliberal' as a catch-all term, because there is the danger that it becomes 'a detached signifier'.[7] Rowlands and Rawolle argue that defining the term should be 'the collective responsibility of all who draw on 'neoliberalism' in their work'.[8] I adopt Harvey's definition of neoliberalism:

> Neoliberalism is […] a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade […] If markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary.[9]

Marketisation is driven by the belief that market exchange is an ethic in itself, capable of guiding human action.[10] Marketisation emphasises contractual relations between individuals, rather than state intervention in society. This thematic analysis focusses on the effects of marketisation of previously non-market spheres, in education and the arts, and the way that this discourse shapes designer positionality in performance, and the expression and enactment of agency. I propose that contemporary design/scenography education treats precariousness as a structural given that designers are taught to navigate. In the final part of the chapter, I return

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[6] Kunst, p. 6.
[7] Stephen J. Ball, 'Performativity, Commodification and Commitment: An I-Spy Guide to the Neoliberal University', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60.1 (2012), 17–28 (p. 18).
[8] Julie Rowlands and Shaun Rawolle, 'Neoliberalism Is Not a Theory of Everything: A Bourdieuian Analysis of Illusio in Educational Research', *Critical Studies in Education*, 54.3 (2013), 260–72 (p. 270).
[9] Harvey, p. 2.
[10] Harvey, p. 3.

to the research questions that guide this study, examining the interrelationships between positionality, agency and precarity.

2. Summary of Individual Narratives

2.1 Andrew: I'm Worried About the Lack of Text-Based Work

Andrew leads a two-year postgraduate design/scenography programme in a conservatoire. The course admits three students per year. Andrew attended the Motley Theatre Design Course and he suggests that confers responsibility on his role as a teacher of design/scenography:

> It isn't just the designers that have their name as Motley but it's also the teachers that have their name as Motley and we should also pay attention to and respect that.

The explicit pedagogic relation of Andrew's course is to train students to become designer/scenographers in professional theatre. Andrew describes the course as 'vocational […] a mix of the brain and the brawn'. The place of the interview was a meeting room, where portraits of patrons and alumni hang on the walls. The presence of the portraits implied a theatrical lineage and professional heritage. A theme that emerged from the interview was how professional networks facilitate designer/scenographer agency.

A few weeks prior to the interview for this research, Andrew explains that an article about student exhibitions was published in a 'trade' magazine. The article suggests that there are some 'deep tensions' between 'tradition and innovation' in design/scenography and there is implied criticism of Andrew's course. Andrew's response to this event highlights themes emerging from his narrative, that I will

explore in the thematic analysis in the second part of this chapter.

> It's almost the fact that she [the journalist] criticises us for understating. I said "Yes, but we're supposed to be understating in a way". She talked about the great concepts of design that are coming out of some of the art schools and then she said, "These weren't that, in a way" and I thought "Thank goodness, because we're not prescribing anything. If anything, we're trying to identify with a text'. I think the people that know, will know.

2.1.1 Theatre as Text

The concept of design/scenography underpinning Andrew's course conceives of 'theatre as text':[11]

> If I'm proud of anything that this school has that underlines it is that it believes in the language on the page that the playwright delivers. You can cut it, but you generally can't change it and that, I like, and I believe in.

Andrew associates the emphasis on text in design, with his training at Motley. There is evidence here of folk pedagogy, where Andrew's own pedagogy is shaped by his own experiences of being taught on the Motley course. Referring to one of the photographs that he chose for the interview, he says:

> I do see it as a piece of text and I can vividly see the story in it. If there is anything that Motley emphasised, it was the text and how important the language is on the page.

[11] Bosch and others, p. 118.

Figure xxx: Andrew's Image: An Example of Student Design

Andrew contrasts the notion of creative 'vision' where a designer/scenographer imposes a view on the text, with 'impression'. This approach, Andrew explains, requires the designer/scenographer to design through text. He distinguishes between technical elements of design; 'line, colour, value (light and dark), form and texture', with other qualities, including 'the presence of humanity' and 'tension'. Therefore, the role of the designer/scenographer is to work through text. Andrew says, '[L]ove the text, be sensitive to the text […] but don't bend your interests into it [...] Don't distance yourself from it'. This approach reflects that highlighted through the Motley case study; of an axiological concern with identity formation of students where students are taught to be aware of their creative identity, and to balance this with a text.

2.1.2 Poetic Realism and the Motley Legacy

When Andrew and I look at the example of student design, which he has brought to the interview, he says:

> What is essential to each image is the presence of character. It tends to be in a relationship and then it moves within that and around to define a space and it attaches itself to things that are significant in theatre which is the atmosphere.

The notion of 'character' comes from a naturalistic understanding of theatre that is based on character, arising from a Stanislavskian tradition of performance making[12] that is also grounded in the hierarchy of the text. Andrew attributes the notion of 'making space' in design to the training he received at Motley. He uses

[12] Konstantin Stanislavsky, *Building a Character* (London: Routledge, 1964).

the phrase ‘negative pregnant space’ to describe Motley’s design work. He argues that the designer/scenographer should always avoid ‘over-completing that picture’, leaving spaces for the audience to complete the picture in their imaginations.

On this course, designer/scenographers are conceptualised as collaborators working in a hierarchy. Andrew argues that this arrangement necessitates mutual respect between different parties. However, he observes that is changing:

> This is another problem with interviews these days for people applying for design jobs is that they say, “Here’s the show, here’s the brief, come into the interview with some ideas for this play” and you go, “Hang on we’re not architects, we don’t bid for jobs!”

Andrew’s description of working through text, avoidance of imposing a vision, and the importance of making space for interpretation, implies that the designer/scenographer cedes aspects of identity to others such as the text, performer and the audience. However, Andrew recognises that design/scenography is changing. He reflects upon a conversation with one of the judges of the Linbury Prize:

> She said, “I’ve seen all the portfolios that applied to the Linbury this year and I’m slightly […] I’m worried about the lack of text-based work”. There is a split, which is interesting.

This comment perhaps reflects the difference between the text-focussed tradition that Andrew inherits from Motley, and the emergence of a more expansive conceptualisation of design/scenography, that I identified in chapter two.

2.1.3 Lineage and the Professional Network

Andrew’s reference to ‘the people that know, will know’, implies that there are insiders who would reject the article’s criticism of the course, with the outsiders

being those in ‘Art Schools’. Andrew explains that he attended the Byam-Shaw School of Fine Art. He says that this connection facilitated entry to Motley; ‘I was welcomed by Percy Harris with open arms’. He describes the connections as familial, and associated with a theatrical lineage:

> There was a genuine relationship which you could say was family. If you look through the history books you see that there is that great force of the family and relationships and working together. I think Percy was particularly generous when she looked at my portfolio she saw more than what was there on the floor.

The implication here is that there may be a recognisable design style associated with a particular lineage, which would be recognised by ‘the people that know’. In chapter five I argued that the design style of poetic realism is shaped by aspects of folk pedagogy.

Andrew explains that students on his course are not permitted to take paid employment alongside their studies. Instead, the institution engages patrons to provide financial support to students:

> We have a department that’s trying to find people who would like to attach themselves to students’ education and sponsor the student and you can, in a sense, own them in a way. You can come to see them in performance. You’ll be invited to events to see them.

Andrew raises concerns about the reduction of UK Government funding for higher education. He reflects on, and contrasts his own experiences of being a student:

> Could you do that yourself, now with fees? No, you couldn’t and the consequence of that is that all sorts of things are going to be difficult. Even getting a flat of your own or a place of your own. Arts and humanities don’t bring financial rewards.

He suggests that students adopt strategies to manage precarious conditions of

work, such as applying for funding and starting their own companies, a point that I will return to in the thematic analysis of narratives later in this chapter.

In the first year, students do 'rotational training' in different departments. Students work with the production manager for five weeks learning 'stage craft' and have responsibility for preparing the theatre for three 'shows', as crew members. Students do craft and making activities; sign writing, technical drawing, model-making and wardrobe, scenic art and prop-making. The purpose of developing craft skills in student designer/scenographers is not to equip designer/scenographers to become makers, but to equip them to be able to work with makers:

> Knowing how to turn something on a lathe means you'll probably appreciate the professional craftsmen that you're working with. You will probably be able to converse with them.

There is an explicit relation here between embodied cognition, through the use of tools and techniques, and the designer/scenographers ability to communicate with others involved in the making performance.

The hidden curriculum implies that students can expect to be working in large venues, with teams of technical staff working with them. Andrew explains that work placements used to be an important element of the programme, but many arts institutions no longer offer them. Instead, Andrew invites professional theatre-makers to work with the students. In year two, professional designers are invited to work with students on real productions. Andrew describes this approach as being 'like the Motley projects'. The projects emphasise the importance of the 'production timeline' in the process of design/scenography in production, suggesting that the course attempts to embed this 'within all practice'. There is

some evidence here of place-based pedagogies, with the experiential dimensions of practice being located in professional contexts.

Andrew describes the process of collaboration with directors like 'a really good game of tennis'. Because 'a designer can't do it alone'. Successful collaborations within a performance making hierarchy are built upon mutual respect and equality. However, designer/scenographers are not always visible as contributing authors of a performance, as Andrew explains:

> It was ten years since Koltai rolled up at the Motley exhibition and said, "The one thing that we have got to constantly fight for is the fact that when a director talks, he isn't just talking about him and his or her production. It is the designer's production. It is the director's production and those names must go in complement to one another".

2.1.4 Andrew's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

Andrew's course conceives of performance making as hierarchical, with designer/scenographer agency expressed through deference to text, director and audience. This necessitates ceding identity in response to the text. Professional agency is distributed through networks and the early career designer/scenographer's entry to these networks is facilitated through gate keepers and patrons. Social privilege may play a role in facilitating entry to these networks. The enactment and expression of designer/scenographer agency in this course is informed by the training Andrew received on the Motley course, and there is evidence of folk, embodied and place-based pedagogies that reflect this. I explore these themes in more depth in the thematic analysis in the second part of the chapter.

2.2 Jane: We Went Back to the Text […] One of Percy's Big Things

Jane is the course leader for a Higher National Diploma (HND) course in

Performance Design. This is a new course, that has recruited twelve students. The course aims to prepare students to become designer/scenographers in theatre, film and television design, and art installation design. However, the course is positioned within the subject area of film and media and so the design/scenography experiences available to students are primarily within film and television. Jane trained at the Motley course and one of the images chosen by Jane for the interview is of Margaret Harris. Jane chose this image because, for her, it represents her approach to design/scenography and teaching; 'Percy. I do think about what would she have done and how would she have done it?'. This is an explicit reference to the ways in which Jane's pedagogy is informed by her own experiences at Motley.

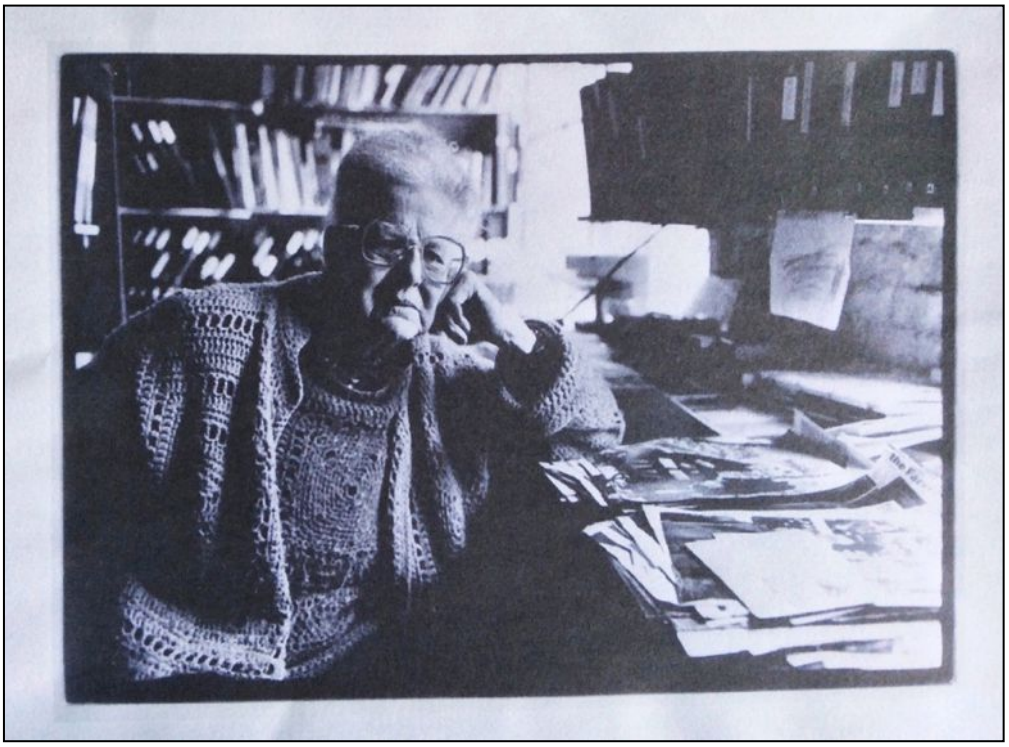

Figure xxxi: Jane's Image: Margaret 'Percy' Harris, Course Director of the Motley Theatre Design Course

Jane's early career was as a freelance designer/scenographer in theatre, but she went on to work in film and television design. Jane entered teaching by invitation; she met the course leader of one of the main degree programmes, 'through a mutual friend'. In her most recent work, she has created haptic, experiential installations in gallery contexts. Referring to another of her chosen images for the interview, of an interior, she explained that her interest in installation stems from haptic dimensions of performance experienced by performers working in designed environments:

> People are going into the gallery and I always thought it was a shame that it was only actors and the crew that experienced that sort of like stepping back in time into another world feeling and that it would be interesting to see if you could do that within the public gallery.

Figure xxxii: Jane's Image: A Designed Interior for a Television Set

The interview took place in a shared office space. Jane commented that the students did not have a permanent studio space in which to work, and neither did she:

> They don't have permanent spaces, they just have shared desks. I have a desk at home. If you're coming and setting up every time - the short courses I teach in here - we get different desks in. You need a space where they can leave stuff.

This is perhaps an example of where place-based dimensions of learning are disrupted.

A few months prior to our interview, Jane's course was validated. Her experience of this process highlights a dissonance between design/scenography practice and UK higher education quality mechanisms. The narrative that emerges shows how Jane is positioned as both an insider and an outsider in higher education, reminiscent of Clarke's notion of the 'refugee colony' of practitioners, that are 'in but not of the university'.[13]

> I just sent off the course that I had written, and it went to various boards. I don't know they knew what they were reading because it is such a specific - ground plan and elevation sheets - and they probably don't know what that means. It's looking at what the awarding body's guidelines are and making it work for the real skills that you need to actually do the job. My hidden curriculum is that I want them to leave with a good portfolio, so they can go into any art department. The guiding body of here - it's almost - they've met the outcomes and it ticks the boxes.

2.2.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Jane refers to using the 'proper criteria' and finding ways to 'manipulate it' so that she is able to teach students 'what I think they need to know'. There is

[13] Clarke, p. 115.

evidence here that there is dissonance between the 'proper criteria' associated with a technicist curriculum, and the embodied knowledge that Jane identifies as important for professional practice. Jane reflects upon her experiences of assessment at the Motley Theatre Design Course:

> The brilliant thing about Motley was that no-one was judging you, apart from the real professionals. It wasn't in terms of outcomes so you could mess around. It's more and more difficult because of the constraints of assessing and criteria but you try and do it. It's the freedom isn't it?

Jane implies, that the learning outcomes associated with technicist approaches to learning, prevent students from creative experimentation, with the implied failure that this might bring. She suggests that learning outcomes have become part of the 'contract' in higher education. However, she emphasises that this does not prevent her from teaching what she thinks her students need to know, explaining that 'You could teach whatever you like really, once the door's shut!'. Jane is the only interviewee to refer to what she is doing as 'the hidden curriculum'. In the next section I will identify aspects of the visible and hidden curriculum in Jane's course.

2.2.2 Design/Scenography Skills and the Design Process

Jane explains that new applicants may not have a design background, and so there is a foundational element to her course, that includes drawing skills, life drawing ('something at Motley which I found really useful') and colour theory. The curriculum is based around a design process which has identifiable steps she learned on the Motley course. When I ask Jane, what connects all of the photographs she brought to the interview, she says: 'Text, text, text […] don't worry about it, just

look at the text and for me that is what we do all the time'. Therefore, the curriculum takes text as a starting point. The first stage is for students to read the text, but with a sense of detachment 'without thinking too much', suggesting that they rely upon 'gut feeling'. The next stage is to do a 'script breakdown', to identify locations, numbers of rooms and from there to begin the process of 'research'. Jane uses the word research in the context of 'background research'. Research will consider 'Anything from the architecture to the small props to the characters'. Students are then introduced to ground plans. Again, Jane's teaching practice is influenced by her experiences on the Motley course:

> I was looking at my Motley stuff and ground plans are a way to sort of weigh up […] [I]t's not an easy way to start but if you're not that good at sketching, you can just scribble out spaces and that's the way you start.

Referring to another of her chosen images for the interview, Jane explains that students are encouraged to think about the 'rules' of space in design, that even if they are working with abstract spaces 'it still has to have its rules and principles'. Where Jane's course does diverge from Motley is in technical drawing, she says 'Motley were rubbish at technical drawing!', but Jane's course includes this 'right from day one'.

Figure xxxiii: Jane's Image: Photograph of a White-Card Model

The next stage is to prepare a three-dimensional model of the design. Jane explains that the model box is primarily a tool for communicating with others. The final stage in the design process is for students to prepare dressing plans for the set, and to buy and make props. Jane's course takes students through a sequential design process, similar to that described by Isackes; 'read the play, do research, develop a concept, do sketches, and devise the floor plan'.[14]

Jane says that she wants students to leave the course with a 'good portfolio' so that they are able to secure work. Students complete a series of live projects, which often involve working with visiting professionals:

> Wherever I can, I will get visitors in and know the sort of whole thing with Motley working with real directors, pairing people up with real directors and getting out there.

Jane reflects on some of the challenges associated with the collaborative process, responding emphatically when asked if there is a hierarchy in performance making; 'Definitely!'. She reflects on the relative visibility of the designer/scenography in the creative process:

> I do find the design is often seen as "Oh anyone can do that, it's just a room". I'm on a mission - and they're going to get really hacked off with me - but I want my students to be respected on the floor

Another aspect of Jane's 'hidden curriculum' is the importance of 'atmosphere' in design. When we look at another of her images, she reflects upon the role of design in helping actors to experience a haptic connection with the space. Jane has extended this to her professional practice by creating designed

[14] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 41.

environments in gallery settings. In this way, Jane has taken the concept of ‘atmosphere’ and narrative learned through the Motley course, and has applied this as a mode of encounter, in a gallery setting. Two further aspects of the hidden curriculum are also reminiscent of the Motley course. When we looked at another of the images, Jane explained that students learn about budgeting, finding inexpensive ways of producing effects.

Figure xxxiv: Jane's Image: Photograph of Mirror, Lamp and Red Light

2.2.3 Jane's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

The implicit and tacit pedagogic relations on Jane's course are informed by her training at the Motley course. However, in the gallery-based installation design/scenography, Jane appears to be extending aspects of Motley practices away from text but retaining 'atmosphere', with evidence of a move towards *design/scenography as a mode of experience.* Jane resists quality processes in higher education, by being explicit about having a 'hidden curriculum' which aims to teach students the 'real' skills that they need in order to secure and sustain work. There is tension here between Jane's inclination towards social constructivist models of education, learned from her experiences on the Motley course, and the tendency toward technicist models of education in contemporary learning contexts. On the course, the designer/scenographer is conceived as being in service to a creative hierarchy, but this conceptualisation does not reflect aspects of Jane's professional practice, where she is positioned as an auteur artist. However, this is a recent departure in Jane's professional practice.

2.3 John: It is a Problem of Producing Work […] in an Arts School Context

John leads a three-year BA Hons 'Theatre Design' programme at a regional post-1992 university. This is a term used to describe a former polytechnic that was granted university status through the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992. The course is located within a department of art and design. John worked as 'a practising theatre designer' for twenty-five years before entering teaching and was invited to teach by a professional contact. John comments upon the social

backgrounds of students who attend the course and contrasts these with students on 'classic theatre design' courses:

> The sort of people they recruit to those London courses tend to be – and I need to choose my words very carefully – culturally engaged and probably more affluent students, more middle-class students, educated students, that might want to be the classic theatre designer and perform that role. They have a model and a text, and it probably will happen for them.

John suggests that the location of the course impacts upon the opportunities available to students who graduate from this course.

The place of the interview was a small, very cramped office in a large university building. On the day of the interview, the office was very hot. However, the windows could not be opened because, at the time of the interview, buildings in this area of the campus were being demolished and replaced by new buildings, creating a very dusty environment. I consider the reasons for increased capital investment in buildings by universities in part two of this chapter.

There are social and temporal dimensions shaping John's narrative. For example, John says that changes in design/scenography education and practice are associated with political and social events in the mid-2000s:

> Do courses lead in terms of pedagogy or understanding of our practice or is it the other way around? Do we follow what's happening in practice? It's obviously a two-way thing but more importantly is the much wider context of what's happening in society and politics and the economy.

John notes the impact of reductions in public funding on professional practice, locating the cause for this as arising from the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government's policy of 'austerity':

> There are a lot of people who looked elsewhere for funding and not

> just for funding but where to take theatre and this coincided with this different emphasis on types of forms of theatre making and so to such an extent that people were looking to the NHS for performance funding and all sorts of things.

The policy rationale for austerity was the short-fall in public funding caused by payment of Treasury tax-payer funded finance to financial institutions. This was intended to off-set losses triggered by a global recession, caused by risky investments by large financial institutions. It is in this context, that John comments on the 'perpetual financial crisis' in theatre funding, and the associated impact on the design/scenography curriculum:

> Any cuts that the Coalition Government brought in had a huge impact and I think what happened to theatre and also therefore reflected to a certain extent in courses. We are in these institutions which have their own problems of course associated with austerity and funding and all the rest of it.

Furthermore, John also associates the culture of austerity with cuts to funding of arts-based courses in his institution, suggesting that this is a particular problem for art courses that need dedicated space. The quote which is most representative of John's narrative is a reflection on the ways he sees performance practice changing:

> There was a genuine radicalisation that was going on in theatre that coincided with a change of emphasis on the making of it. In 2007 at that national exhibition anything that looked like a box set or within a proscenium stage looked ridiculously old fashioned. There were more and more theatre designers that were also directing, lighting, writing [and] performing and this whole thing called theatre design, or scenography or design for performance was slowly eroding and breaking up.

2.3.1 Expanding Notions of Design/Scenography

John locates a 'turning point' in British design/scenography, 'precisely' to the

2007 exhibition of the Society of British Theatre Designers. He is referring to the *Collaborators: UK Design for Performance* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum in London. The exhibition identified three trends in design/scenography; collaboration, site-specific design and 'found-space' design.[15] John says he observed 'more sort of physical forms of theatre' as well as 'far more visual forms of theatre' at this exhibition. He explains that, around this time, the course team decided to introduce elements of performance into the programme in response to the absence of a theatre/performance programme at the institution and being exposed to performative approaches to design/scenography whilst visiting the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) exhibition. In the thematic analysis in part two of this chapter, I discuss design/scenography exhibitions in more detail.

John explains that the first year of the programme incorporates a foundation year. The first-year introductory projects do not engage with aspects of 'theatre design' straight away:

> We don't launch them straight into what you might call and define 'theatre design' and you could ask "What is that definition?". It could be many different things but we want to bring them straight into this relationship between sign and performance even though it's in an art school.

Students create puppets to develop an understanding of 'bodies in space'. The second half of the first year engages students in practical making projects which include set, costume, projection mapping and lighting. John explained that the course was moving away from costume in favour of design technologies, describing them as 'more current, more useful'. John hoped that this would create a niche

[15] Kate Burnett, *Collaborators: UK Design for Performance*, ed. by Keith Allen, 1st edn (London: Tadberry Evedale Ltd., 2007).

offering which, John says, ‘makes us different from other courses’. In year two, students have an opportunity to do a work placement. They are also exposed to a programme of workshops and masterclasses that involve visiting practitioners sharing their ‘practice or research’. Students also engage with what John calls ‘laboratories’. These are ‘theme-based’, with four held each year. John explains that; ‘They are a place like an old fashioned ‘crit’ where you present, criticise, present, criticise both internally and externally.’ The final year of the programme introduces opportunities for final year students to engage with live work, including working alongside a professional company to produce a realised design or a live devised performance project in the ‘Company Project’ module. The image chosen by John for the interview shows a group of students performing in a production created for the ‘Company Project’ module. John explains that this is an opportunity for students to produce authored work, that did not necessarily require acting or writing skills. In the next part of this narrative analysis, I will explore the idea behind this project in more detail.

Figure xxxv: John's Image: A Photograph of Students Performing with a Puppet in 'The Company Project' Module

2.3.2 Vagrancy and Expansion in Design/Scenography

John explains that one of the factors that has influenced the content of the curriculum is that the course is located in an art school. The institution does not offer theatre or performance programmes and so John needed to find new ways to expose students to live work. Therefore, the 'Company Project' module engages students with making, directing and performing their own work. A principle of the company is that participants 'are all as equal as you can be'. The module uses the form of verbatim theatre[16] as a vehicle for self-directed and performed student work, as John says, 'They have absolute authorship of it […] they ended up directing it and doing everything'. The dissolution of discreet professional identities in processes of performance making prepares students to be flexible in their approach to performance, a conceptualisation of *design/scenography as a mode of organisation.* John contrasts this with his professional experiences:

> I take a 'total theatre' approach to theatre design and I think if I had been a newer generation […] I can see it in some of my students; the barriers between theatre design and design for performance and directing and lighting design and all the other aspects of theatre making, those barriers have broken. I am of the age where you carved out a career in a particular area.

2.3.3 John's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

John's course does not cleave to a particular conception of design/scenography or the designer/scenographer but instead embraces expansive notions, even though the course is titled 'Theatre Design'. The implicit pedagogic relation of John's course is underpinned by pragmatism as a response to

[16] *Verbatim, Verbatim : Contemporary Documentary Theatre*, ed. by Will Hammond and Dan Steward (London: Oberon, 2008).

institutional circumstances, rather than folk pedagogy. The approach recognises the lack of stable career opportunities in 'theatre design', outside the academy; 'It's rare that they step into this neat job that's called 'Theatre Design'', but is still concerned with preparing students for professional practice of some kind. The expression and enactment of agency on this course positions designer/scenographers as collaborators, performers and directors but not authors, because the chosen performance mode is verbatim theatre.

2.4 Matthew: Theatre Practice was Changing

The 'Performance Design and Practice' course that Matthew leads is offered by an institution that was a conservatoire but is now part of an 'arts umbrella' university. Before becoming a teacher, Matthew says he was a 'jobbing designer' working in regional repertory theatre 'in the eighties just before Thatcherism came and got rid of rep'. Matthew explains that he started teaching on the course twenty years ago but that the course has changed considerably in the past ten years. Matthew says that 'the phrase we often use is that we teach *through* theatre design rather than teaching theatre design'. He suggests that design/scenography provides the site for critical examination of notions of audience, space and reality; 'It questions who are the audience? When is performance, performance? When is it? How does it relate to real life? The performance of everyday life and space'. The course is a generalist course, exposing students to a range of different disciplines:

> Think of a large building with a great big front door". Everyone is coming into this door called 'Performance Design and Practice' and when they go out, they go through a very small door like 'costume design and maker for film' or 'live artist' or 'theatre designer'.

The interview took place in Matthew's office in a restored and repurposed building. The entrance to the building is vast and leads to a large indoor atrium space. The studio space available to students is diminutive compared to the atrium space. This prompted an off-recording discussion with Matthew where he suggested that buildings were being used in higher education as marketing tools, but that the spaces for learning were inadequate. The confounding of place-based pedagogies in contemporary design/scenography education is a theme that recurs in many of the narratives and I address this in more detail in part two of this chapter.

Matthew contrasts the artefacts associated with design practices such as model boxes and drawings, with the live moment of performance, and this discussion forms the basis of the key themes emerging from the interview.

> We feel that you learn about performance through performing and that partly goes back to my own experience at Wimbledon when we started to come out of just making model boxes and actually wanted something more. We wanted to perform and the tutors there realised that in performing, we were learning about performance and theatre in a different way than we were when we were cutting up bits of card and learning technical things. The fact that theatre and performance takes place over time and model boxes and drawings are just artefacts. They're useful but they're just artefacts.

2.4.1 Interdisciplinarity and Expansive Notions of Design/Scenography

The images chosen by Matthew illustrate the performative dimensions of design/scenography, showing street-based performances by students and staff.

Figure xxxvi: Matthew's Image: Street Performance with Puppet

Figure xxxvii: Matthew's Image: Devised Performance by Students

Figure xxxviii: Matthew's Image: Staff Devised Performance

Matthew says that the approach to design/scenography in the course is non-specialist, and this is in part a response towards an interdisciplinary 'attitude' that students bring to the course:

> I always ask them in the interviews "Why do you want to come to this course, why this course?" They say "I quite like performing, but I don't really want to be an actor" or "I am good at photography". "I'm interested in time-based media and this course will allow me to do that".

This stance contributes to what Matthew describes as a 'broadening, expanding and exploding' effect on the subject of 'theatre design', 'whether institutions like it or not'. It is perhaps also reminiscent of the constructivist-technicist model of teaching that I described in chapter two, where teachers create opportunities for learners to explore their own learning preferences, within circumscribed learning outomes. Matthew explains that the first-year curriculum consists of weekly blocks of instruction, associated with different aspects of performance making, including: 'light and sound', 'space', 'text', 'audience', 'making and performing', for example:

> We will ask the students to use their bodies in the space, describe scenarios like "It's poolside in the South of France and it's 2.30 in the afternoon and it's 90 degrees. There's a bit of a tension in the air, show us that with just the bodies and the space".

The 'text' block of instruction considers different dimensions of text; students might be asked to devise a performance that responds to a stimulus or will be given a play text and be asked to interpret that through design/scenography. The aim of this exercise is to develop students' awareness of the differences between 'authoring work and theatre design', which Matthew says, 'is not the same as authoring your own work':

> Theatre design is a very particular thing and dealing with theatre design in a sense of the dramatic theatre, is a very particular thing. One is dealing with a text, one is interpreting a text, dealing with a group of actors probably practically and a director to interpret that text.

The emphasis in the taught curriculum is on theatre design techniques, but, Matthew says 'that doesn't mean you have to do theatre design'. Matthew explains that this approach is informed by Lehmann's notion of 'postdramatic performance'. Matthew locates the changes in his own design/scenography practices to around the time *Postdramatic Theatre* was published. Matthew's description of performance practices through his chosen images reflect Lehmann's notion of 'parataxis'.[17]

Matthew explains that the course name had changed from 'Theatre Design' to 'Performance Design and Practice' and that this was a 'conscious thing of trying to say we're not just theatre design anymore'. The course renaming highlights how disciplinary boundaries are policed within institutions, when confronted with an interdisciplinary subject area:

> There was always a bit of a tension within the School of Art and now there's a tension with the School of Drama and Performance [LAUGH] and I think it's just the nature of our subject really. I'm not blaming any of those people. The nature of the subject is that it links to other disciplines quite directly. I believe in interdisciplinarity, not everybody does. People think things should be in these boxes that have to be divided.

In the literature review, I noted McKinney's observation that: 'It can be difficult to determine where the boundaries of the field are drawn and invigorating to question if they need to be drawn at all'.[18] The course that Matthew leads appears to challenge ontologies that form the basis of organising in HEIs. There is a tacit

[17] Lehmann, p. 86.
[18] McKinney and Iball, p. 133.

pedagogic relation that resists defining the boundaries of design/scenography.

2.4.2 The Representation of Performance Practices in Design/Scenography

At various points in the interview, Matthew discussed the function and purpose of model boxes in design/scenography, and how design artefacts have become surrogates for the process and concept of design/scenography. He says 'They're just a means to an end. They're functional'. Aspects of performance which Matthew says the curriculum should focus on are; time, space, reality and audience. Matthew's choice of images reflects 'theatre in a public context'. This was a deliberate choice, he says because this strategy encourages students to examine who the audience are, but also to consider how the conditions of spectating are not fixed but are changeable:

> Watching people, watching them perform and watching the audience who didn't know there was a performance. So, it was a very complex thing. The watchers watching the watchers!

Matthew suggests that collaboration skills are essential for devised work:

> Theatre designers have to be good collaborators and understand that but so do you if you want to devise your own work. In fact, probably even more so if you want to devise your own work because you have got to understand the roles.

When I shared with Matthew that Pamela Howard had used the expression that a theatre designer is 'like a wife',[19] Matthew's response suggests that alternative forms of organising may symbolise resistance to those traditional power relations:

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[19] Pamela Howard, 'Directors and Designers: Is There a Different Direction?', p. 26.

> Yes! That's rather good. In that traditional model you are. And of course, that's what students resist! They don't want to be the missus! Who does? Exactly, they don't want to pick up the kids [LAUGH] Yeah, that's great, she's right.

2.4.3 Matthew's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

The conceptualisation of design/scenography on this course is expansive, inclusive and interdisciplinary. The implicit pedagogic relation does not seek to challenge hierarchical forms of theatre-making per se. Instead, the course encourages students to use the skills associated with design/scenography, to explore different dimensions of performance in a critical way, examining places for performance, the organisation of performance making, and the role of the designer/scenographer in performance making. Therefore, the expression and enactment of designer/scenographer agency is conceptualised as either authoring own work, collaborating with others to devise work, or interpreting a text in collaboration with others.

2.5 Sal and Meghan: They Really Have to be so Driven

Sal and Meghan are joint course leaders for a three-year degree BA Hons programme in 'Costume and Performance Design' at a drama school. Sal completed her undergraduate degree in 'Arts in Social Contexts', and this included an element of 'theatre design'. Sal started to work as a theatre designer, when she 'discovered Motley' and says she saw Motley course as a 'ticket' to develop her practice as a theatre designer. Sal's entry into teaching was prompted by having a child. She explains that freelance work at that time was 'difficult' and so the offer of teaching work led to a twenty-year career at the institution. Meghan trained as a 'theatre

designer' at the Wimbledon College of Arts. She worked as a designer for twenty-five years, before entering teaching. Meghan jokingly refers to the primary driver to enter teaching as 'thinking I should pick up some better paid work'. I consider how the career biographies of teacher/practitioners have been influenced by precarious professional conditions, in the thematic analysis later in this chapter.

The aim of the course is to equip students with the 'expressive' and 'technical skills' needed by a designer/scenographer. Including; costume design, model-making, computer-aided technical drawing, text analysis and collaboration with other theatre makers. Sal and Meghan provide a definition of scenography:

> We create a world where the characters inhabit and that includes time and space. What we've got is not just two dimensions or three dimensions, we're actually working in a fourth temporal fourth dimension.

The interview took place in a design studio. Sal explains that tutors are available to students full-time, through studio instruction, which she describes as 'informal tutorials […] Not just on the timetable'. At the beginning of the interview, Meghan and Sal had returned from a meeting about how 'informal' teaching time was not visible to senior managers because it did not count as 'contact time' in the workload allocation model. Managers argued that staff were not fulfilling 'contact time' requirements, because studio time was not defined as 'lecture' time; an issue that I address in the thematic analysis in part two of this chapter.

Sal and Meghan were preoccupied with two things in the interview; how the demographic features of student cohorts were changing and the absence of stable employment opportunities for graduates. The following statement from Sal captures the focus of our discussion.

> All work is freelance and they're [students] amazed that there used to be the rep system where you would have a designer and a deputy designer and head of a whole team. I don't think there's one theatre now that does that. The trouble is that there isn't that learning career path, so it has to start here. There's a lot of young directors who also don't know how designers work because they have never worked in an establishment with established designers.

2.5.1 Precarity, Gender and Social Mobility

Sal and Meghan suggest that it is increasingly difficult for students to gain live design/scenography experience. Students do placements, but these do not necessarily expose them to live performance because most designer/scenographers work freelance, and in a studio. The absence of work opportunities has prompted students to create their own companies, but as Sal observes, 'whether they're funded or not is another matter'. The expectation of being paid as a designer/scenographer is in question, as Meghan explains:

> Meghan: You have to do a week of R&D which you might not get paid for. It's very, very - what's the word?
>
> Sal: Precarious!
>
> Meghan: Yes! That's the word! They really have to be quite tenacious and find ways of surviving.

In the thematic analysis, I identify precarity as a significant factor shaping the ways I which designer/scenographer agency is expressed and enacted in design education.

Meghan chose a photograph of a male student for the interview. The image had been used in marketing materials for the course, as a way to attract more male applicants. Meghan explains that 'It's mostly women coming to these courses'. She suggests that the introduction of tuition fees, income disparity, and geography are contributing to less diverse cohorts. This contrasts with her experiences:

> When I was at Wimbledon I got a full grant and there were no fees. My course was mixed up beautifully with males and females and people of different backgrounds. We were finding that's reduced significantly because it's probably only people who come from middle class backgrounds who can afford […] three years now.

Sal suggests that the career opportunities available to Meghan and Sal's generation are not available to any young person 'which doesn't have cash […] swilling around that their parents can give them'. However, they suggest that the high applicant rate of females is not reflected in the transition to careers in professional practice:

> If you go up in the profession now and list those designers the majority of designers are still male. What is it that still creates more male designers in the real world? What's going on?

Meghan speculates that early-career designers are faced with precarious conditions of work, that this may negatively impact particularly on women, who choose 'teaching and things like that' with more stable career opportunities in activities such as 'leading design workshops […] art workshops'. This is a theme that I address in more detail in part two of this chapter.

Figure xxxix: Sal and Meghan's Image: Male Student

Sal explains that they ‘bury in discussions’ with students, the need to be proactive in generating work rather than ‘sit waiting for a telephone’. In this way, strategies for managing precariousness are embedded in the hidden curriculum of the course. Furthermore, the course leaders use their professional networks to help students begin networks of their own, the aim being to develop ‘an amazing contact book’.

2.5.2 The Job of the Designer/Scenographer

Meghan explains that the course team were under pressure from the institution to use the word scenography in the course title. However, they felt that this would ‘create complications for applicants’ because of the difficulty of defining exactly what scenography is; ‘nobody knows in this country really what it means, who is not already in the business’. This prompted a discussion about what design/scenography is, with Meghan suggesting that the model box is a proxy for the process of design/scenography. As Meghan comments ‘that’s not what we do […] that’s not the end of what we do’, and that model boxes are ‘just a vehicle’ or ‘tool of communication’ which people associate with the act of designing; ‘people only see it as you only do model boxes’.

Meghan and Sal say that collaboration is central to the job of design/scenography and so collaboration amongst students from different courses in the drama school begins early on in the course. For example, in induction week, first year students from different disciplines (‘you get actors and lighting designers and lots and lots of different groups’), work together on a project called ‘Start Here Now’. Students are given a news item and are asked to ‘respond to and create

something'. Following induction, students are exposed to different aspects of theatre and costume design, including; an introduction to the principles of theatre design, dramatic space and performance, the collaborative process between director and designer, costume design, design skills (storyboarding, model boxes, costume drawing, technical drawing, computer-aided design (CAD) and research) and analysis of performance and theatre industry. Alongside this, students participate in what Meghan and Sal call the 'ART: A scenography project'. Sal explains that they identify a location on campus, and then identify three or four stimuli which may, or may not, be text-based. Students are asked to create a scale model of the space and to author a narrative, with characters, in response to the space and the stimuli.

In year two, students from different departments work together on a performance, and are assessed differently based on their individual specialisms. This has caused tensions amongst students because their collaboration in performance making is perceived by them to be at odds with their individual achievement in their degree programme. Meghan explains:

> Every module is a contract with the students, they are like "How can I get a good mark in this module? How can that help me get a better mark?" and it kills creativity. They are afraid to move until how they've been taught to do something.

Meghan suggests that the boundaries between subject areas have been strengthened through the development of strong specialist course identities, with 'everybody moving further away from each other'. The course emphasises 'collaboration and communication', 'whether that's through drawing or talking or making models or so on'. However, Sal and Meghan say that learning through collaboration is 'often messy' and at odds with quality mechanisms in higher

education:

> I actually think that what's happened, and it may be to do with all universities, is the over documentation. We have these juggernaut sort of descriptions of the modules, and intended learning outcomes, and criteria and assessment and it's just, just, just so knee-deep in it. It's like treacle - arghhhhh!

In the thematic analysis in part two of this chapter, I consider the impact of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education and their impact on signature pedagogies associated with the creative and performing arts.

In reference to one of their chosen images, they explain that they have been attempting to incorporate new forms of design/scenography practice into the programme, including site-specific performance, which Meghan describes as 'radical'.

Figure xl: Sal and Meghan's Image: Photograph of Site-Specific Design and Performance

Sal and Meghan note the emergent interdisciplinary nature of design/scenography; ‘theatre and other art forms [...] they have kind of blended together’. They observe how students are embracing technology; ‘Young people are so confident and used to technology that they don’t think twice using a lot of new equipment that to us is magic but to them! [LAUGH]’.

2.5.3 Sal and Meghan’s Narratives Summary: Positionality and Agency

The explicit pedagogic relation of communication and collaboration is realised through the place-based pedagogy of studio instruction. The implicit pedagogic relation of the course is that students learn that they need to be proactive and generative in their approach to making work. The course exists in an institution where there is a tendency towards strongly bounded disciplinary territories. Students express concerns about their individual performance being negatively affected by the poor performance of others. Sal and Meghan’s narrative underscores an incongruence; between an explicit pedagogic relation that is concerned with teaching collaboration and communication, perhaps informed by folk pedagogies, and tacit pedagogic relations, informed by a technicist model of education, that emphasises individual achievement in a degree programme. On this course, designer agency is conceived of as being distributed through, and reliant upon, professional networks as a tactic for negotiating ‘precariousness’. The pedagogy and curriculum of the course position the designer/scenographer in performance making in a variety of ways; as a ‘traditional’ designer, responding to text, and as a collaborating author of performance. I consider the impact of precarity on

pedagogy in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

2.6 David: You've Got to Have Someone Who Knows What They're Doing in Each Area

Before entering teaching, David worked as a stage manager. He explains that:

> When all that wasn't bringing in enough money [LAUGHS] I was sick of sleeping in the back of the transit and I thought 'It's time to get a decent job' and it just so happened that an FE college was advertising for somebody to teach stagecraft and I got that post.

David is the course leader for two design/scenography courses; An MA in Scenography and a BA Hons in 'Creative Theatre Technologies', in another post-1992 university.

The marketing materials for the BA Hons programme describe the aims of this course as being to develop:

> Enterprising students who are capable of independent thought, of working between and across art disciplines, and of creative and critical engagement in the production, design and management process for performance.

This is the only course in this study that explicitly combines technical theatre technologies with design/scenography. David explains that the programme is having difficulties recruiting students. The reasons he gives for this is that the aims of the course, and the course title, were conceptually difficult for applicants to grasp. Although a 'scenographic attitude' is fostered through the Creative Theatre Technologies course, design/scenography is not the focus of the course:

> If we put the word design in there then they would expect to be taught how to design. And we don't do that. 'Designers and Design' would be a sexy handle. If we had design in the title we would get loads of people through the door.

David explains that the course combines different 'backstage' roles in performance and includes training and education in technical skills, design/scenography and stage management. The composite role that emerges is of a generalist creative technician, capable of producing small-scale design/scenography.

The physical location of the interview was a small meeting room. As I approached the room, I became aware of the way space was defined in the physical architecture of the building. There is a central atrium, with teaching rooms arranged off the central atrium. The central atrium provides large social spaces for students on each floor. These are large and airy and light. In contrast, the teaching rooms were small.

The explicit pedagogic relation of the course is to train, what David refers to as, 'creative technicians'. These are people, he says, who are able to turn spaces into 'exhibition spaces or studio spaces', but who can also use design/scenography skills.

> For me a scenographer has a responsibility for all elements of the design - lighting, sound, costume, environment. With small scale touring, you can't afford to have a designer for each element. So there's economic mileage in having somebody that has that overview. The New Vic theatre up in Newcastle Under Lyme, they have lighting designers, they have costume designers, they have set designers and the person with the overview for that is the director. Designers always tend to be subservient to directors and my way of thinking is that it's collaborative and a process driven thing.

2.6.1 Economic Constraint, Course Design and Student Expectations

David says that the course design was shaped by economic constraint. He talks about this in two different contexts. First, that there is a lack of institutional

investment in performance facilities:

> How on earth can I get our students hands-on flying experience? We can't fly anything. You can't fly a paper aeroplane in here! They're no use to you! We don't do any flying here and we don't have a massive workshop. Building flats is out of the question here.

David explains that, in his view, senior managers at the institution 'cannot see the shortfall in the building' and the impact of this on 'the shortfall in the discipline'. He explains that they decided not to invest in the facilities required to offer courses that require access to space and technical facilities, preferring instead to situate performances in local performance venues.

David says that there is an absence of permanent design/scenography jobs in regional theatre, which he associates with a lack of good, and adequately funded, regional theatre:

> Where do you go and see a musical in Scotland? Edinburgh perhaps? Where do you see regional theatre? Stirling, Abderdeen, Pitlochrie and all over. Where in this British Isles has one of the most prestigious arts festivals in the world? Where do I see great small-scale touring theatre? Go to the Fringe. What happens to it afterwards? It disperses. It dissipates.

David argues that these factors impact directly on student expectations of theatre and performance, and the offering that HEI's make to students. He argues that there has been a growth in the popularity of musical theatre courses because it is attractive to students and 'commercially viable':

> Students won't go to the theatre but will go and see *The Woman in Black* or *Wicked*. "It's glamorous, it's got all the things I need and there's probably a job at the end because there are no theatres around but there will be musicals". I would differentiate between musical theatre and musicals but I don't think students do, so we offer a musical theatre degree but it's about musicals [MIMES AIR QUOTES]. It never touches Brecht or Weill for example.

David suggests that this expectation is reflected in the preferences of senior managers, who do not embrace the conceptual nature of his course; 'I don't think the VC likes it. It isn't sexy enough and it isn't 'Fame''.

David talks about the impact of tuition fees on student expectations of the programme, saying that students think "I'm buying a degree". David argues that this attitude has restricted innovation in curricula and pedagogies:

> I think the demands on delivering finite packages has increased. So, where we could once have a very loose structure to a module and be guided by the way in which students want to take that I don't think we can do that anymore. One of the big reasons why we can't do that anymore is because students are paying £9000 and say "and you're telling me I have to make up course content". It's just not going to happen is it!

The marketisation of higher education and the reconfiguring of learners as consumers directly impacts upon relational aspects of teaching and learning that are associated with creative and performing arts education. David says he has noticed an increase in academic workloads since the introduction of higher tuition fees. This, he says, directly impacts on the ability of staff to engage in research and curriculum development. Budget constraints have also impacted on David's ability to bring in specialist teachers:

> Budgets are very tight. XXXX used to come in and do VL work but I can't afford to bring her in anymore. Students have to put up with my rudimentary design skills. I'm an all-rounder rather than a specific designer although lighting is probably my strength.

The generalist nature of the programme appears to be a pragmatic response to economic restrictions and David explains that the growth in small-scale touring performance informed the rationale for the programme which is to combine technical skills with design skills:

> With small scale touring, you can't afford to have a designer for each element. Financially you can't do that and so you've got to have someone who knows what they're doing in each area.

At one point in the interview, David defines scenography as 'what the actor doesn't see and the director's never envisaged'. Design/scenography is conceptualised as an invisible art form. This invisibility in 'backstage roles' he says is a disadvantage in the 'higher education market place'. He says that:

> [Those in in the theatre] industry are crying out for what they term, the backstage roles', but applicants to higher education are much more likely to be attracted to those courses which are perceived as 'glamorous'.

2.6.2 The Generalist Creative Theatre Technician

David suggests that economic constraints necessitate the assimilation of different roles in performance:

> The scenographer in the art context actually knows how to do what the others are doing. So it's a case of saying, "I would like this I'm not sure how to achieve it". Then the designer arguably becomes a maker […] It's again down to economics. It's human resources as well as physical resources.

The first-year curriculum introduces students to different disciplines, for example, music, film, video and text interpretation and realisation. The curriculum includes a module which is entitled 'Visualising the Text'. He says of text, 'That's what it's about for me and that for me has always been my starting place'. However, instead of a play text, David asks students to interpret and visualise a novel, 'scenographically':

> The idea of giving them a non-theatre text for me was the right level of challenge. I always thought that the nineteenth century gothic novel was a very visual thing anyway and most of us have an image in our head and so why does it have to be a performance text? What do you see? And they all sort of said "Are you mad?" Well yes [LAUGHS]

Just go away and read it and see what happens!

David distinguishes between academic and vocational learning, arguing that a university course should equip students to engage in 'an academic study of the discipline', which critically examines 'what people do, and *why* they do what they do'. In the first year, students study semiotics and gender theory. They apply their learning in three ways; through verbal analysis, in performance and through 'academic' writing. The final component of the first year is a production module, where students are 'attached' to a group of performers, with the role of 'scenographer', working alongside the performers: 'physically realising the performance environment'.

In semester 1 of the second year of the programme, students complete a scenography installation project. Then they do a work placement. David uses his professional network to secure placements for students. David did not provide much detail about the final year of the programme. He made reference to a site-specific module and explained that students complete a dissertation about a topic of their choice.

2.6.3 David's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

The explicit pedagogic relation in the course is that students receive a generalist education about backstage roles, which includes the role of designer/scenographer, technician and stage manager. The implicit pedagogic relation is that graduates of the programme will be flexible, deploying a range of skills in different contexts. The tacit pedagogic relation resists commercially popular performance forms, such as musical theatre. There is an attempt to maintain

criticality as a core dimension of the university learning experience in performance. However, there is dissonance between students who expect to learn towards clearly defined outcomes, and what David perceives as the necessity for students to define their own outcomes as a way to become creative practitioners; an incongruence between technicist and constructivist models of learning. The expression and enactment of designer/scenographer agency on this course is conceptualised as expansive and interdisciplinary, merging the notions of scenographer/technician and collaborator working in small-scale touring contexts. Designer/scenographer agency is not positioned within a hierarchy per se, but as a collaborator who, in David's words 'just gets the job done'.

2.7 Rowena: Young People Aren't Interested in Traditional Theatre

Rowena works in an Arts University in South West England. The course recruits around eighty students each year. Rowena explains that the course takes 'a funnelled approach', with the first year of the programme introducing students to a broad variety of practices and disciplines. It is anticipated that, by the time students enter the final year, they will have identified a specialism. Around forty students choose costume design, with around ten to fifteen students choosing 'theatre design' as their specialist pathway.

Rowena completed an undergraduate degree at Royal Holloway, before completing a postgraduate design/scenography course at The Slade School of Fine Art. Rowena explains that she had applied for a place on the Motley course but was rejected: 'When I went to Motley it was at Riverside Studios and it was really cold and damp and horrible, and I thought Percy seemed very intimidating!'. Rowena

contrasts what she describes as the 'Fine-art-ness' at the Slade School of Art, with the 'craft-based' training offered by Motley. At that time, Rowena says, Motley 'felt outside the mainstream theatre world':

> Whenever I think of Motley, I always think of those big old cloths, with aniline dyes. I always think of that. Cloths which are painted.

It is interesting that Rowena had a different perception of the Motley course compared to other views expressed in the interviews for this thesis. As Rowena had experienced an Art School training, she may have been on the other side of the 'split' that Andrew discussed in his interview; between the textual and the visual. Before becoming a teacher, Rowena worked as a costume designer for film and theatre. She entered teaching because 'having children and being fully focused on a freelance theatre design career are a little incompatible'. The interview took place in Rowena's office. The office overlooks a large design studio. Conducting the interview was difficult because there were frequent interruptions by students and staff.

The focus of the conversation was about the tension between the 'old school' of design/scenography, and the kinds of things that 'young people' wanted to pursue. The focus of the narrative is captured in the following quote:

> I think the whole of theatre is on a kind of knife-edge at the moment. There's definitely a change going on. If you are the old school - maybe people are trying to cling onto that a bit [...] I mean I'm clinging onto the old school [...] There's going to be a revolution I think and it is happening in site specific work where young people aren't interested in traditional theatre, they are but they're also interested in the new spaces for theatre [...] the political power of theatre.

Rowena's view of 'young people' is perhaps generalised, and contrasts with David's account where his Dean of School typifies new applicants as only being

interested in musicals because this contributes to recruitment. However, what both accounts show is the expansive and expanding nature of the field of design/scenography.

2.7.1 Site-Specific Performance, Course Identity and Design/Scenography

Rowena explains that course design has been shaped by engagement in the *Cultural Olympiad* in 2012. The Cultural Olympiad was a programme of arts activities that ran alongside the 2012 Olympic Games in the UK. One of the aims of the Cultural Olympiad, was 'to shape a sense of an internal sense of national identity'.[20] Rowena explains that the course had taken a 'traditional' approach to design/scenography but that the Olympiad prompted engagement with site-specific work and the experience prompted Rowena to rewrite the programme to recognise the range of contexts, beyond theatre, that designer/scenographers would be working in. For example, Rowena defines a designer/scenographer as someone using 'all of those things […] the set and costume, the props but also the sound, the lighting' in order to 'create an emotional response or a meaning or a kind of message or metaphor'.

2.7.2 Curriculum, The Model Box and Tuition Fees

Rowena does not describe the curriculum in detail. However, throughout the interview, Rowena often contrasts her study, work and life experiences with those of her students. Teamwork is central to the philosophy of the programme, and this

[20] Josh Abrams and Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, 'A "United" Kingdom: The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad', *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 35.1 (2013), 19–31 (p. 20).

forms the explicit pedagogic relation. As Rowena explains; 'It's all about working in teams and we really believe that this course is really based on learning to work in teams as your way of learning'. She refers to the kinds of behaviours that students need as 'proactivity', 'resourcefulness' and being 'cheerful'. Rowena talks about these behaviours in the light of changing working patterns in 'the industry', contrasting this with her own education and work experience:

> When I did the Slade course it was all about practising in a theoretical context. I think that is good if you have the time and the luxury to practice speculatively. Nowadays you can't do that because of the pressure of the fees and the pressure of what the industry is like. If your face doesn't fit on the first day, you get sacked […] and so we have to teach the students positive and pro-active behaviours of being resourceful, of being cheerful and of being creative but not annoyingly creative being able to cope under pressure [...] not cry, not be upset.

Rowena's comments imply that there is a hidden curriculum that teaches students that work is precarious. By 'hidden curriculum', I am referring to Margolis' definition that I highlighted in the introduction to this thesis. Margolis describes the hidden curriculum as that which is 'hidden by a general social agreement not to see',[21] and 'intentionally hidden in plain sight'.[22] The implicit pedagogic relation here is about preparing students to manage precarious working conditions. One aspect of this appears to sublimate agency in response to this; 'being creative but not annoyingly creative'. Rowena describes the purpose of the model box in design/scenography, describing it as being 'like a drawing' and a way to 'communicate ideas'. She suggests that it functions as a problem-solving tool because 'you work things through with card and bits of paper and so on.' The model

[21] Margolis, p. 2.
[22] Margolis, p. 1.

box also represents the importance of ‘technical expertise’ in design/scenography, required to accurately measure and design to scale. However, this too is subject to change:

> The model will probably stop happening at some point in the near future. I think it will actually because if you can model something on a screen that you can really walk around in.

Rowena explains her own preference for a model, describing herself as ‘an old dinosaur!’.

Similar to Sal and Meghan, Rowena also refers to the ‘female dominated’ nature of student cohorts. She suggests that this may be due to the precarious conditions of work:

> It’s becoming more and more female dominated. I’m not quite sure what that’s about, apart from the fact that it’s so badly paid. Back in the eighties there were lots of male theatre designers.

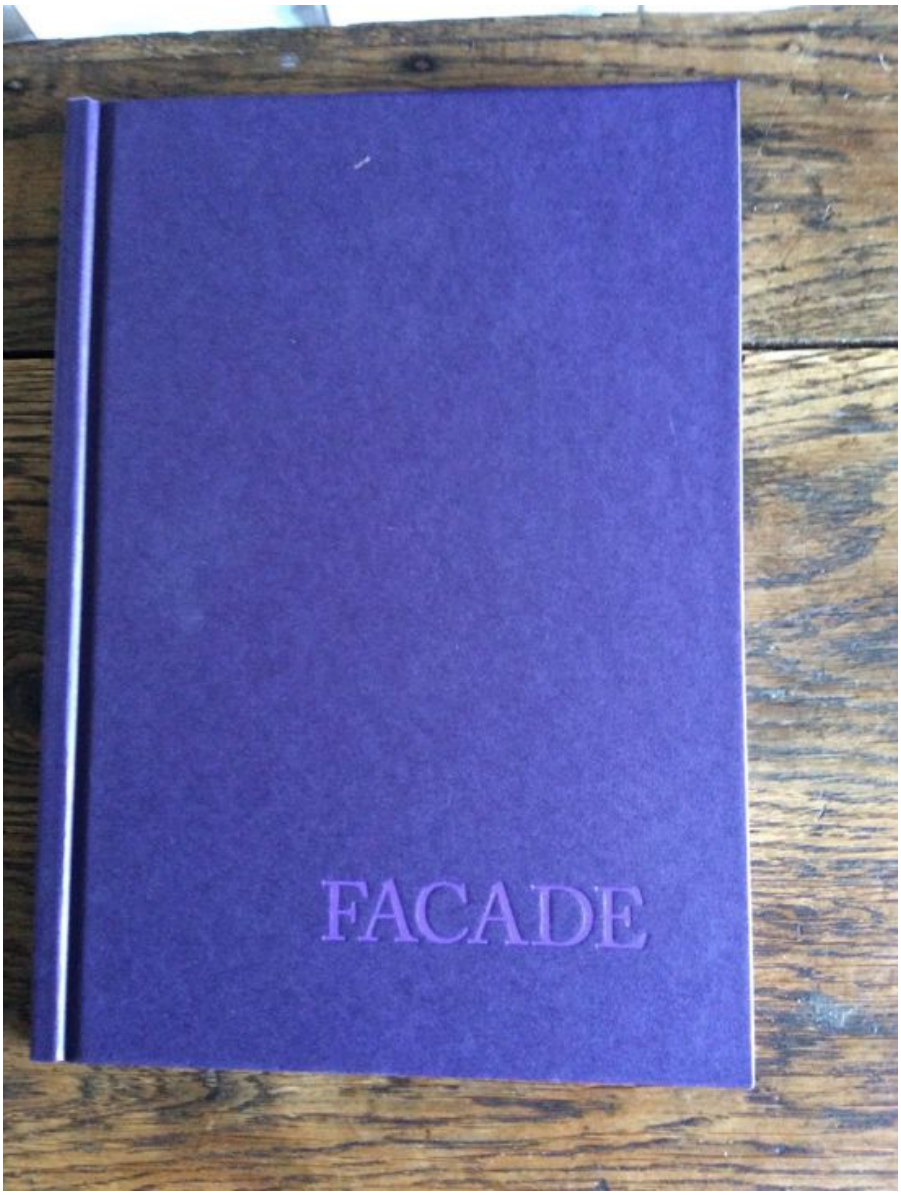

Figure xli: Rowena's Object: The Graduate Year Book

Figure xlii: Rowena's Object: Page of the Year Book, Showing Graduating Students

The ‘graduating students’ pages of the year book for the course shows a majority of female students. It is notable too that the group lacks diversity in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity. I consider issues of equality in the arts in the thematic analysis in part two of this chapter.

Rowena refers to the impact of tuition fees on the expectations and experiences of students, suggesting that there is an impact on mental health:

> Some of my students really suffer from stress and a sense of perfectionism. This may also be related to the raising of ‘A’ level grades. I think it was generally considered very impolite to question or discuss one’s results with one’s peers. Today the reverse is true. I think it’s partly connected to parental expectations and to the fees and to the media which is saying to the student body, “You’re not getting value for money!”.

Rowena suggests that these pressures have introduced an element of fear in learners; ‘[T]he thing about students now is that they’re much more fearful than the used to be’. She argues that ‘fear is a dimension of learning’ because it involves ‘pushing boundaries’. This is a theme which I explore in more detail in part two of this chapter.

Rowena explains that the assessment practices on the course have changed because of this. When students present their work at exhibition, the marking tutors use different coloured post-it notes to give feedback relating to three or four learning outcomes. Then the marking tutors hold a ‘parity meeting’ to discuss and agree grades. The student is invited to attend a meeting with the marking tutors and a ‘scribe buddy’; another student, who takes notes. Students engage in a discussion with the marking tutors and receive written feedback. Rowena suggests that a depersonalised system of marking, using ‘mark sheets’ is distrusted by students; ‘I think the students think “Oh mark sheets are sneaky” you know?’. In chapter two,

I highlighted a theme in the literature review that is concerned with how technicist assessment regimes may negatively refashion relations between teachers and learners:

> When teachers test students, they generate a distance between them. What might have appeared to be a friendly, collaborative relationship is replaced with one in which the teacher becomes the student's judge.[23]

Rowena's comment perhaps reflects some of the distrust that arises from learners when a mutual relation is disrupted.

2.7.3 Rowena's Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

The explicit pedagogic relation of the programme is what Rowena calls 'complementarity'; students 'learn by doing' through collaboration with others. The implicit pedagogic relation is that graduates should expect to negotiate precariousness by adopting accommodating behaviours, including ceding of creativity. The pedagogy and curriculum of this course positions designer/scenographers in performance making as collaborators but in no way conceives them as authors of their own work. However, there is some incongruence in equipping them with the skills required to negotiate precariousness, whilst encouraging them to adopt a specialism by the end of the course.

2.8 Miles: They [Collaborations with Directors] Never Worked

Miles leads a BA Hons 'Theatre Design' Programme in a conservatoire. The

[23] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 212.

course has a recruitment target of ‘between sixteen and eighteen’ students each year. He trained at the Wimbledon School of Art which he describes as having ‘a culture of really high-quality skill-set in model-making and drawing’, and started teaching by invitation. Miles says he does not recall taught sessions on the Wimbledon course, but that most instruction was studio-based and observational:

> What happened was that you were given this [model] brief and then [...] you could go into the third-year studios and see what they were doing, and their models were just extraordinary. You could talk to the tutor about it and he would show you how to use the ruler and he’d say “Well be careful when you change the blades” But there weren’t strict classes in it. It was observation and taking in a tape measure and measuring things and then using a scale ruler and then working out.

Miles is describing dimensions of embodied pedagogy in this example. In the social studio environment, learners and teachers help new students to learn by demonstrating tools and techniques.

The place of the interview was a shared open-plan office. The entrance foyer of the building felt like a professional theatre venue; with a box office, a bar/cafe and large seating area. This is significant in the context of Miles’ narrative because the course emphasises professional training. Miles says that the course was evolving to bring in elements of the ‘arts school experience’. He explains that a colleague had exhibited at the Prague Quadrennial and this prompted a course redesign, to include new elements, such as installation design/scenography. The course redesign prompted Miles to reflect upon what he describes as an ‘English’, text-based, theatre tradition, and this provides the focus for the quote that captures the focus of our discussion:

> One of the great strengths of British design has been its ability to design through models. It’s just an established order in Britain isn’t it? It has that sort of 1930s British design. So, you’ve built up that

> reputation of dependability and practical and three weekly rep and you can turn it round and be very, very, very good because obviously, English theatre is far more text based and so it's much more about the spoken word and simplicity of design.

2.8.1 The Model and British Theatre Design

Miles explains that his course has a particular reputation for 'an incredibly high standard of model making'. He says that models play an important role in communicating design ideas:

> People love models - they still do, even in this sort of age of computer and virtual models. Not everybody has got into 3D modelling you know. A lot of people can't you know, it doesn't quite have the same [...] it may change but I think there's something about it that will still remain.

He argues that 'designing through a model is much more immediate', enabling designer/scenographers to make quick adjustments in discussions with others in the performance making process.

Miles suggests that his training at Wimbledon has contributed to the particular focus on model making on this course, highlighting how Miles' teaching is informed by an inherited lineage that can be located with the Motley Theatre Design Course Richard Negri was the course leader for the programme Miles studied. Negri was an alumnus of the Old Vic Theatre Design programme taught by Margaret Harris of Motley. Miles locates the 'culture of model-making' as being a 'unique British thing' and contrasts this with the tendency towards three-dimensional perspective drawing in European design. He suggests that there are two factors which have shaped the British model-making tradition. First, the influence of the ideas and practices of Edward Gordon Craig. Second, the 'text-based' tradition of British Theatre. He argues that that three-dimensional drawings are not able to fully

express minimalist location descriptions:

> How do you create the atmosphere for The Caretaker, you know when you read the stage directions that describes 'a room full of junk, a very seedy place with water leaking roof'. He [Negri] said "What do you do to create that space?" and he took a chair and he placed it with a naked bulb above it and there was a bucket on the floor and a single drip going into the bucket of water, and actually it was everything that was needed.

2.8.2 Hard Work and Preparation for Professional Practice

The hidden curriculum of the course embeds notions of 'hard-work, dependability and practicality' situated in a temporal frame of 'three-weekly turnarounds' for performances. Miles explains that these come from a tradition of repertory theatre, which has a rhythm of 'designing and making, designing and making, designing and making'. Miles' teaching is informed by the tacit values and practices that he gained through his training and through working as a designer in professional repertory theatre, such as production schedules and turnaround times. Furthermore, students are treated as emergent professionals who are then inculcated into these practices. These examples suggest that Miles' teaching is informed by folk pedagogy.

In the first week of the first year, students complete a 'paper-sculpture project'. Each student is allocated a space of three cubic meters in the gallery to present a three-dimensional 'organic form […] fish, birds, insects, animals'. Students then work with stage management, sound and lighting students to stage the exhibition. In the 'four-week group project', students work together to realise a design. Individually, they produce models and the group agrees on the best design, and then work together on making a detailed model, which will then be displayed in a public exhibition. Miles explains the aim is to foster collaboration and

compromise amongst participants.

The ‘Foundations of Set Design’ two-week project teaches students skills in model-making. For example, ‘how to mitre with the blade […] how to change a blade properly’, ‘exercises in scale reading’, ‘how to make figures’. Students are asked to realise a line of a poem, in set and costume. The ‘Small-Scale Design Project’ teaches students about designing for a small studio environment. Students are given a text ‘usually twentieth or twenty-first century texts - Pinter’s Beckett’s, David Mamet’s’. The brief stipulates that the design should fit in a van, preparing students to design for small-scale and touring productions. In the ‘Three-Week 2D to 3D Project’ students are tasked with turning a two-dimensional image (such as a painting) into a three-dimensional design, using lighting, technology and traditional design elements. In the ‘Wearable Art Project’ students are asked to create costumes, usually for an Opera or ballet, out of what Miles calls ‘non-typical materials […] recyclable materials’. The ‘Independent Project’ is a four-week project, where students work with a visiting director. The brief is to design for the in-house proscenium arch theatre. Students prepare ‘finished models and a set of drawings’ but the assessment (‘seventy percent’) focuses on the process of design, rather than the models and drawings. In the Summer term, students begin the ‘Ten Week Puppetry Project’. Miles explains that this is the ‘most expensive - staffing wise’ element of the programme. First year students are led by five or six second year design/scenography students and the project is facilitated by ‘two design tutors and two puppet tutors’.

In year two, the curriculum further emphasises the ‘dependable, hardworking, practical’ focus of the course. Students work in teams on three or four live

productions and work in the studio ‘nine till five, nine till six’ as Miles explains it ‘They do professional graft’. Students are supported by visiting lecturers, available full-time in the studio.

In the final year, the emphasis is on the transition into professional practice. Students complete two work placements in the final year. The placement opportunities are drawn from friendship and professional networks of course tutors. Students also have the option to complete two ‘Specialist Study Projects’, where they can choose the focus of the design project.

On the day of the interview, Miles was organising a field trip for final year students but few students had signed up. Miles’ colleagues were discussing their frustrations with the lack of student engagement coupled with the expectation of good marks:

> If they [students] don’t get the mark they thought they were entitled to, they’ll still be as gripey and sour as anybody about it. There are great tutors who have left places, and people struggling and changing their philosophy of how they teach because students expect it all to be handed on a plate to them.

2.8.3 Miles’ Narrative Summary: Positionality and Agency

The expression of designer/scenographer agency on this course is framed by a temporality which mirrors repertory theatre ‘turnaround times’ for performance. This idea is embedded in the implicit pedagogic relations of the course where students learn to become a ‘grafter’ who can ‘get on’ with others in the performance making process. Students are exposed to live, and professional, practice. The pedagogy and curriculum of this course positions designer/scenographers in performance making in a variety of ways. They are, in the main, positioned in service to a text and director, with an emphasis on model-making and a text-based

'British tradition'. However, there are also spaces within the curriculum which appear to position the designer/scenographer in nuanced ways; as specialist, and flexible, collaborators, who are able to work in any kind of performance making structure.

3. Thematic Analysis of Narratives: Social and Cultural Dimensions

The next part of this chapter is a thematic analysis of narratives. As I explained in chapter three of this thesis, thematic analysis is a 'method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set'.[24] The analysis identifies recurring themes from across the interview data and therefore focusses on factors within, and outside, higher education that impact upon design/scenography pedagogies and curricula. Recurring themes that related to factors impacting on the design/scenography curriculum arising from within H.E, include; higher education tuition fees, learning spaces for the design/scenography curriculum, and quality assurance mechanisms in higher education. Recurring themes that related to factors impacting on the design/scenography curriculum in the external environment, concern public funding of the arts in the UK and precarisisation of work in the performing arts. I will consider the impact of these factors on pedagogies and curricula in practice. I argue that these themes should be situated within the context of neoliberal governance mechanisms in both higher education and professional performance practice. I suggest that neoliberalism

[24] Lorelli S Nowell and others, 'Thematic Analysis', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16.1 (2017), 1–13 (p. 2).

constitutes precarious subjectivities through processes of 'social insecurity, flexibility and continuous fear arising from the loss of stability'[25] and that precarity is impacting upon the ways that designer/scenographer agency is expressed and enacted in pedagogies and curricula.

3.1 Higher Education Policy and Design/Scenography Education

3.1.1 Higher Education Tuition Fees

A theme that emerged from the interviews is that higher education tuition fees influence student expectations of learning, student cohort characteristics and course identity. I will first provide a brief introduction to tuition fees in higher education in the UK, before addressing each theme.

McGettigan suggests that the notion of 'co-payment' for education arose because of 'precipitous' cuts to higher education, in the 1980s and early 1990s. Participation in higher education grew rapidly following the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act by the Conservative Government, led by Margaret Thatcher,[26] which prompted questions about how an expanded system might be paid for. Tuition fees were first introduced into higher education by Tony Blair's 'New' Labour Government, in 1998. Tomlin argues that the policy was not concerned with 'equality of outcome', but towards a meritocratic notion of 'equality of opportunity', however she argues that this policy ignores 'entrenched inequality' in society.[27] The higher maximum tuition fees of £9000 for undergraduate

[25] Kunst, p. 6.
[26] McGettigan, p. 18.
[27] Liz Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), p. 5.

programmes were introduced by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2012, in response to the recommendations made by the Browne Review of Higher Education.[28] Students are entitled to loans that pay for tuition fees and living costs. Wyness provides one rationale for the introduction of higher education tuition fees, explaining that the policy ambitions to increase university funding per head, improve equity in the higher education sector, and increase the numbers of students attending university, could *only* be achieved through the introduction of tuition fees.[29] A different view is offered by Harvey, who suggests that although the introduction of tuition fees was presented as a 'common sense' policy, it was framed by neoliberal ideas that emphasise 'the significance of contractual relations in the marketplace'. He suggests that 'common sense' approaches to policy are 'profoundly misleading, obfuscating or disguising real problems under cultural prejudices'.[30]

Introducing contractual relations into previously non-market spheres assumes, suggests McGettigan, that undergraduate education is a 'normal consumer good'. However, positioning students as consumers, reframes higher education as only being of benefit to the individual consumer, sublimating any public benefits associated with the public university.[31] Privileging the individual over civic society, is, according to Harvey, a defining feature of neoliberalism.[32]

In this context, it is interesting to note how interviewees in this study

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[28] Elizabeth A. Bates and Linda K. Kaye, '"I'd Be Expecting Caviar in Lectures": The Impact of the New Fee Regime on Undergraduate Students' Expectations of Higher Education', *Higher Education*, 67.5 (2014), 655–73 (p. 656).
[29] Gill Wyness, *Department of Quantitative Social Science: Policy Changes in UK Higher Education Funding , 1963-2009*, 10-15 (London, 2010), p. 5.
[30] Harvey, p. 39.
[31] McGettigan, p. 55.
[32] Harvey, p. 1.

characterise relations between students and the institution. Meghan says: 'It's like every module is like a contract with the students and it kills creativity'. David also refers to students' perceptions of consumption of higher education, suggesting that some students believed they are 'buying a degree' or 'a product'. Similarly, Miles notes the accompanying 'rights' that consumerism confers on students; 'It's made the students more questioning, demanding'. For John, the reality is that 'higher education will be driven by economics'.

Cribb and Gewirtz suggest that a marketised system that situates students as consumers, threatens the 'distinctive social role, and ethical raison d'etre' of universities.[33] They propose that consumerism 'hollows out' the notion of the university by commodifying knowledge and, in so doing, suppresses counter-cultural critique. For students, marketisation appears to offer the promise of individual empowerment through consumer rights, but Clarke argues that this comes at the expense of real empowerment gained through democratic debate and participation in civil society.[34]

The emphasis on consumer rights, appears to reduce both policy and public debate in higher education to concerns about 'value for money'. Rowena explicitly names what she calls the 'media' view of higher education which situates higher education as being 'poor value for money'. With the constitution of the Office for Students (OfS) in 2018, the notion of value for money is explicitly embedded in the mission statement of this new regulatory body; ensuring that 'qualifications hold

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[33] Alan Cribb and Sharon Gewirtz, 'The Hollowed-out University? A Critical Analysis of Changing Institutional and Academic Norms in UK Higher Education', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34.3 (2012), 1–13 (p. 13).
[34] Clarke, p. 133.

their value over time' and that students receive 'value for money'.[35]

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) introduced by the UK Government in 2016 is a measure to assess teaching quality. The TEF was devised by the Conservative Government as a mechanism that would allow universities to charge differential fees, and so in this way might be more accurately thought of as a measure of value for money. The proposal to associate teaching quality recognition in universities, with the ability to charge differential fees was blocked by the House of Lords. However, the Minister for Education, Damian Hinds reasserted this ambition in February 2018, suggesting that universities should charge tuition fees based on 'the economic value of their degrees'.[36]

The TEF adopts 'proxy' metrics to assess 'teaching quality'; the National Student Survey (NSS) that assesses student opinions of teaching and learning, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on non-continuation rates and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) for progression to 'graduate' employment and 'high skilled' employment. The most remarkable feature of the TEF, suggests Canning, is that it seeks to measure (and improve) the quality of teaching in universities, whilst simultaneously failing to engage with any scholarly literature about pedagogy. He argues that the TEF metrics are 'ghosts' of measurement; a Baudrillardian hyperreality that is 'detached from both reality and representation'.[37] It is perhaps worth noting too that the symbols used to represent

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[35] Office for Students (OFS), 'Office for Students: What We Do', 2018 <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/> [accessed 13 May 2018].
[36] David Milliken and Paul Sandle, 'Britain Wants Degree Fees to Reflect Choice of Subject', *Reuters* (London, 18 February 2018) <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-politics-studentloans/britain-wants-degree-fees-to-reflect-choice-of-subject-idUKKCN1G2001> [accessed 16 October 2018].
[37] John Canning, 'The UK Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) as an Illustration of Baudrillard's Hyperreality', *Discourse*, 6306 (2017), 1–12 (p. 4).

teaching excellence are based on the precious metals of gold and silver, and the less precious, bronze. Borrowed from sporting competitions, as Race notes, these symbols define value hierarchies, creating a competitive environment between institutions, rather than a collaborative one.[38]

One of the interviewees, John, suggests that the DLHE statistics represent an inappropriate measure of the employment outcomes of design/scenography graduates:

> I don't even know why there's a blip there. They must have asked them on the wrong day! [LAUGHS] They do them on one day "What were you doing on this one day on the 14th January 2012"? So, if you have lots of freelance work well, that's that. Tough. That's reflected in other disciplines like fine art where they have similar problems.

The TEF also includes a metric which measures the numbers of graduates progressing into what is described as 'highly skilled work', to be replaced in future years with 'the Graduate Outcomes' record, which may examine anonymised salary data to determine occupational groups.[39] The inclusion of graduate salaries as a proxy for teaching excellence may privilege some subjects over others. Whilst I have not been able to source data about salaries of designer/scenographers, Stage Directors UK did produce a report in 2015, which considered the salaries of freelance directors. They note the absence of pension arrangements, sickness absence pay and low rates of pay for freelance directors, and conclude that earnings average '£10,759/year, and the median was only £5000/year'.[40] The introduction of

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[38] Phil Race, 'The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) : Yet More Competition – and on the Wrong Things!', *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*, 10.2 (2017), 2016–18 (p. 2018).
[39] Higher Education Statistics Agency, 'Graduate Outcomes', 2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes> [accessed 4 June 2018].
[40] Stage Directors UK, *The Stage Directors UK Report on Theatre Directors' Pay* (London, 2015) <https://www.stagedirectorsuk.com/fee-report/>.

tuition fees may have framed students as consumers but consumers of what? Pine and Gilmore argue that a feature of late-stage capitalism is the emergence of the 'experience economy', where consumption of goods and services is replaced by the consumption of experiences:

> [C]onsumption is an experience, every business a stage, and work is theater. In the age of the experience economy, customers themselves become the product. They demand "experiences" that can transform their behaviour, even their lives.[41]

Through the 'consumption' of higher education, individuals make an investment in future selves. For example, Bates and Kaye suggest that students believe that getting a degree will result in improved social and economic mobility.[42] These aspirations are reflected in research carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), who conclude that those with a degree are ten percent more likely to be employed, and will earn 56% more on average than adults who only completed upper secondary education.[43] However, this analysis may obscure occupational earnings, social and biographical factors which impact on a student's entry to higher education and subsequent success in the graduate labour market. Furthermore, the analysis does not take account of the rise in the UK of 'precarious working conditions'.[44]

Higher education policy constitutes students as consumers engaged in a contractual relationship with the institution, whose role it is to provide a learning experience that improves student mobility. This could be perceived as empowering.

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[41] Joseph.B Pine II and James.H Gilmore, 'The Experience Economy', *Harvard Business Review* (New York, 1998), pp. 97–105 (p. 102).
[42] Bates and Kaye, p. 668.
[43] OECD, *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators*, Education at a Glance (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017).
[44] Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 8.

However, Kelly *et al*. suggest that this 'transactional ideal of student subjectivity', results in a 'restricted form of agency', because it comes at the expense of engagement with civil society.[45] The interviews reveal a preoccupation with the effect of tuition fees on student expectations and behaviours, which I will address in the next part of the analysis.

3.1.2 Student Mental Health

Interviewees cite a range of issues which they relate to the introduction of tuition fees. For example, Rowena talks about student anxiety and mental health issues, which she sees as resulting in a 'fear of failure', and a risk-averse approach to learning. Rowena's concerns appear to be reflected in statistics concerned with student well-being. For example, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) note that suicide rates amongst students have risen by fifty-six per cent in the ten years to 2016.[46] Furthermore, Universities UK commissioned research by the Institute of Public Policy Research into student mental health in 2017. The report focusses on recommendations to universities to improve services at point of need, but notably does not speculate about causes.[47] There is some evidence to suggest that the presence of higher tuition fees has negative outcomes for student mental health. For example, a study by Richardson *et al*. concludes that undergraduates' mental health

[45] Paul Kelly, Nic Fair, and Carol Evans, 'The Engaged Student Ideal in UK Higher Education Policy', *Higher Education Policy*, 30.1 (2017), 105–22 (p. 106).
[46] Ellie Bothwell, 'UK Student Suicide Rate "Rises by 56 per Cent in 10 Years"', *Times Higher Education*, April 2018 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-student-suicide-rate-rises-56-cent-10-years> [accessed 1 May 2018].
[47] Craig Thorley, *Not By Degrees: Improving Student Mental Health in the UK's Universities (Research Report)*, 2017 <http://www.ippr.org/research/publications/not-by-degrees> [accessed 15 March 2018].

is partially affected by the level of tuition fees.[48]

Interviewees comment on the impact of tuition fees on student engagement in teaching and learning. Every interviewee in this study stresses the importance of collaboration in processes of making design/scenography. Collaboration has been built into the curriculum in every context, whether through work-based learning, with visiting designers and directors, or through group work within the subject area or in collaboration with other disciplines within the same institutions. However, Sal and Meghan say that student anxiety about individual achievement in their degree makes group work challenging and problematic, because students are reluctant to work with others because they are concerned it will impact upon their degree result. Orr's research, examining student attitudes to group work in the creative arts, notes the incongruence of a system that encourages students to 'fight for marks', whilst studying subjects where group work 'is an imperative not an option'.[49]

3.1.3 Social Background and Diversity

Interviewees refer to the changing demographics of student cohorts on design/scenography programmes, noting the lack of diversity in applicants, which some explicitly relate to the introduction of tuition fees. As Miles observes:

> From a free education to a thousand pounds a year was like "Fucking Hell!" So you're significantly going to start closing the door on a particular part of society or group of people.

[48] Thomas Richardson, Paul Elliott, and Ron Roberts, 'The Impact of Tuition Fees Amount on Mental Health over Time in British Students', *Journal of Public Health*, 37.3 (2015), 412–18 (p. 412).
[49] Susan Orr, 'Collaborating or Fighting for the Marks? Students' Experiences of Group Work Assessment in the Creative Arts', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35.3 (2010), 301–13 (p. 303).

Similarly, Andrew asks 'Could you do that [study design/scenography] yourself, now with fees? No, you couldn't'. John suggests that there is a clear divide emerging between students who can afford to live and study in London; 'more affluent students, more middle-class students', and those that study at regional universities. A specific example of this may be seen in the 'no work' rule at Andrew's institution.

The Student Loans Company assesses loan eligibility depending on parental income, geographic location and whether or not a student decides to live at home. The maximum maintenance fee loan for a student living away from home and studying in London in the academic year 2018/19 is £11,002. The maximum tuition fee loan currently stands at £9250. The total debt that would accrue for a student studying on a three-year programme, and who would qualify for maximum levels of student loan support is £60,756.[50] However, Home Office guidance for overseas applicants estimates that the minimum monthly cost of living for study in London in 2018/19 is around £1,265 per month,[51] leading to a total maintenance income requirement of £15,180 per annum. There is a shortfall between this and the maximum maintenance loan of £4178 per year, or £12,534 over a three-year undergraduate programme. What becomes apparent is that those without independent financial support could not study design/scenography at Andrew's institution, and the equality of opportunity envisaged through the introduction of tuition fees, struggles to be reconciled with structural and entrenched inequalities

[50] GOV.UK, 'Student Finance', 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance> [accessed 12 May 2018].
[51] UK Government: Home Office, *Tier 4 of the Points Based System – Policy Guidance (Tier 4 Applications Made on or after 12th March 2018)* (London, 2018) <https://doi.org/doi:10.14705/rpnet.2017.cssw2017.9782490057016>.

in society.

The response at Andrew's institution, is to offer students scholarships, and a patrons scheme, where patrons provide financial and mentoring support for students. Garber provides a detailed analysis of the history of patronage in the arts in *Patronizing the Arts* and identifies the central paradox of patronage as 'the contradictory mixture of deep gratitude and powerful resentment' which represents the power imbalance between patron and patronised.[52] Furthermore, Huws argues that contemporary forms of patronage are a particular feature of precarious labour in the creative arts:

> This form of control is bolstered by gift relationships, the mutual exchange of "favors" and complicity in ignoring the formal terms of contracts. It can not only lead subordinated creative workers into situations that are highly exploitative but can also make it impossible to seek recourse if the relationship breaks down. It may also be associated with forms of sexual predation or harassment. The forms of resistance to this type of control open to workers are individual and informal: outmanoeuvring the boss, using personal charm or manipulation, using gossip networks to shame and blame, or simply walking away.[53]

Gill reminds us that there is a 'deeply entrenched culture of 'working for free' in the creative industries, meaning that 'there are class implications' for who can work in the creative arts when graduate internships in the creative arts are mostly unpaid.[54] On some of the courses in this study, for example; Andrew's and Miles' courses have a 'nine to five' design studio work ethic during busy production periods and the assumption is that students do *not need to work,* whilst they study.

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[52] Marjorie Garber, *Patronizing the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 2.
[53] Ursula Huws, *Labor in the Global Digital Economy: The Cybertariat Comes of Age* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2014), p. 62.
[54] Rosalind Gill, 'Academics, Cultural Workers and Critical Labour Studies', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 7.1 (2014), 12–30 (p. 15).

Institutions that insist upon full-time training, exclude applicants who do not have independent financial support.

There are aspects of the changing demographic of students in terms of gender too. For example, Sal and Meghan chose an image of a male designer to emphasise that applicants to their course are 'mainly women'. Similarly, Rowena's year book of graduating students depicts a largely female cohort. There is a gender imbalance in recruitment to creative arts subjects. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) statistics for student enrolments in 2016/17, show that females make up sixty-four percent of all students studying creative arts subjects at higher education level.[55] The incongruence that Sal and Meghan identify between high numbers of female applicants but a lack of females in professional jobs, is also reflected in a report by Arts Council England, who conclude that 'women outnumber men across the cultural sector workforce as a whole, although they are arguably under-represented at senior and board levels'.[56]

The issues that emerge from the interviews regarding class, social background and gender are reflected in recruitment patterns to the creative arts. As Stuart Maconie puts in, in *The New Statesman*:

> The great cultural tide that surged through Harold Wilson's 1960s and beyond, the sea change that swept the McCartneys, Finneys, Bakewells, Courtenays, Baileys, Bennetts *et al*. to positions of influence and eminence, if not actual power, has ebbed and turned. The children of the middle and upper classes are beginning to reassert a much older order. In the arts generally – music, theatre, literature for sure – it is clear that cuts to benefits […] and the harsh cost of further

[55] Higher Education Statistics Agency, 'Who's Studying in HE:HE Student Enrolments by Subject of Study 2016/17', 2017 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he> [accessed 24 May 2018].
[56] Imogen Blood, Mark Lomas, and Mark Robinson, *Every Child : Equality and Diversity in Arts and Culture with , by and for Children and Young People (Research Report)*, 2016 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/FINAL report web ready.pdf> [accessed 19 June 2018].

> and higher education are pricing the working class out of careers in the arts and making it increasingly a playground for the comfortably off.[57]

Maconie's polemic underscores what Harvey theorises as a structural effect of neoliberalism; rising social inequality, with redistributive effects away from the least financially and socially mobile in society.[58]

3.1.4 Marketing and Course Identity

A phenomenon arising from marketisation, is the *marketing* of higher education courses. Most of the interviewees referred to discussions that had taken place in their institutions about the relationship between course title and marketing. Interviewees referred to the impact of a course title on how the course may be marketed or understood by potential applicants. Some interviewees chose a course title that reflects the expansion of the design/scenography curriculum to encompass new forms, with many preferring the term 'performance design', rather than 'theatre design'. For example, David explains that the course title reflects how senior managers wanted to market the course to make it 'sexy' and attract more applicants. Sal and Meghan talk about their concerns around using the word 'scenography' because this may have a negative impact on recruitment, because applicants would not be familiar with the term. John refers to the need to develop a 'niche offering' to applicants.

The ease by which a course may be communicated through marketing has also thrown up some unexpected effects for the interviewees, where a course is

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[57] Stuart Maconie, 'Who Let the Toffs Out?', *The New Statesman*, 2015, 25–26 (p. 25).
[58] Harvey, p. 16.

interdisciplinary. For example, Matthew talks about the expansion of the design/scenography discipline as representing an incursion into the territories occupied by other subject areas:

> People think things should be in these boxes that have to be divided […] I find them a bit false. They're useful holding frames […] Fashion designers are making performances. Fine artists are making performances and its perfectly valid. They are not treading on our territory [LAUGH] They're just doing it in a different way [LAUGH]

Earlier in this chapter I noted McKinney and Iball's observation about design/scenography that: 'It can be difficult to determine where the boundaries of the field are drawn and invigorating to question if they need to be drawn at all'.[59] Design/scenography courses with permeable boundaries may be challenging ontologies that form the basis of disciplinary organising in HEIs, but this may impact upon how institutions market those courses to applicants.

A policy note by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) concludes that there is a 'crisis' in recruitment to creative arts subjects at higher education level.[60] Creative arts are not included in the new English Bacculaureate (Ebacc), and the UK Government has set the target of ninety percent of GCSE pupils choosing the EBacc subject combination by 2025.[61] Long term, this will impact upon the numbers of students choosing 16-18 qualifications in performing arts subjects and progressing to higher education programmes. Furthermore, the Russell Group of

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[59] McKinney and Iball, p. 133.
[60] John Last, *HEPI Policy Note 2: A Crisis in the Creative Arts in the UK?* (London, 2017) <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/A-crisis-in-the-creative-arts-in-the-UK-EMBARGOED-UNTIL-7th-SEPTEMBER-2017.pdf>.
[61] Department for Education, 'English Baccalaureate: Eligible Qualifications A List of Qualifications That Count towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).', 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-eligible-qualifications> [accessed 24 May 2018].

Universities have explicitly devalued creative arts subjects at A level. Dilnot[62] explains that since 2011, the Russell Group of Universities have produced a publication called *Informed Choices*.[63] The purpose of the publication is to identify preferred subjects, described as 'facilitative' subjects, that will be 'valued' for a wide range of Russell Group university courses. These subjects, and recommended courses, facilitate entry into what the report calls 'traditional graduate occupations' such as 'Barristers, Doctors, Engineers, Higher Education and Secondary Education Teachers, and Research Scientists'. Creative arts subjects are ranked as having 'more limited suitability' and 'less effective preparation' in the publication. However, the report advises that students wishing to study 'music' or 'art' should have an A level associated with these subjects. The report does not mention performing arts subjects. The *Informed Choices* publication encourages students at G.C.S.E stage to choose A levels, that facilitate entry to a Russell Group institution and, once there, they have the potential advantage of being recruited into a 'traditional graduate occupation'. The marketisation of subject choice appears to be enmeshed with notions of social and economic mobility; or an investment in future self.

3.1.5 Capital Investment and Learning Spaces

I explained at the beginning of this chapter that I made observations about the

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[62] Catherine Dilnot, 'The Relationship between A-Level Subject Choice and League Table Score of University Attended: The "Facilitating", the "Less Suitable", and the Counter-Intuitive', *Oxford Review of Education*, 44.1 (2018), 118–37.
[63] The Russell Group, *Informed Choices: Subject Choices at School and College*, *Informed Choices: A Russell Group Guide to Making Decisions about Post-16 Education 2017-18 (Sixth Edition)*, 2017 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22699009> [accessed 15 March 2018].

place of the interview, as suggested by Clandinin and Huber.[64] A recurring discussion that emerges in the interviews is concerned with spaces for learning, including; buildings as 'marketing', teaching and learning spaces, and appropriateness of learning spaces. Matthew says that buildings function as marketing, a view supported by Madoff:

> [R]ecent architecture has been a victim of its own success. By assuming a new role as the most powerful marketing tool available to corporations and to institutions alike, it has been stripped of its ability to contribute to the discourse of building. Image has triumphed over experience, stasis in favour of change.[65]

The interview with John took place on a building site, so dusty as to prevent us from opening the windows on a hot day. There were ongoing renovations at Andrew's institution too, which prevented me from using the front entrance to the building. There has been considerable investment in capital building projects in universities in recent years. For example, Jones *et al*. claim that:

> Between 2012–2013 and 2016–2017, the Russell Group's collective spend on capital projects was estimated to be £9 billion, similar to the amount spent on the Olympics or the Government's railway investment programme'.[66]

They argue that capital investment is being driven by competition for university applicants. However, they also identify the paradox that 'building design emerged as a low priority' for students, who prefer increased contact time, different 'teaching styles' and technology-enabled teaching and learning.[67]

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[64] Clandinin and Huber, p. 438.
[65] Madoff, p. 172.
[66] Steven Jones and others, 'To What Extent Is Capital Expenditure in UK Higher Education Meeting the Pedagogical Needs of Staff and Students?', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 38.4 (2016), 477–89 (p. 477).
[67] Jones and others, p. 480.

Jane, David and John complained about the lack of permanent, and appropriate space for their needs, as John observes; 'It's a problem particularly for art schools where disciplines need specialised and dedicated space'. Shreeve *et al*., in a study examining pedagogies of art and design, note the importance of the social space of the studio to learning in art and design:

> Studio space has been recognised by other disciplines as contributing to active student engagement with learning and changes from transmission approaches to teaching to social constructivist approaches […] The spaces we describe are integral to the 'kinds of exchange' that constitute what we argue are the signature pedagogies of the disciplines studied. These are characterised by their dialogicality centred on the material and physical nature of learning activities.[68]

The place of the studio in design/scenography pedagogies is a recurring theme. Miles selected an image of the studio to capture the philosophy of his course. The studio provides the focus for Meghan's recollections of her experiences at Wimbledon School of Art and is the physical location of both Rowena's and Sal and Meghan's offices.

[68] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler, p. 136.

Figure xliii: Miles' Image: Photograph of The Studio

At the start of Sal and Meghan's interview the topic of studio instruction and timetabling was at the centre of their discussions, having returned from a meeting with managers who had stated that studio time did not 'count' as formal contact time with students. Studio instruction was framed as 'social' or 'support' time, rather than teaching and learning. However, Shreeve *et al*., suggest that this is a feature of teaching and learning in art and design, where 'Tutors are helping students to deal with uncertainty and to construct their own paths through the discipline, although this also means that dialogue and 'exchange' may be ill defined'.[69] This social mode of pedagogic exchange may be problematic in the neoliberal university, because social exchanges are not measured as 'work time':

> There is no formal or monetary recognition of their productive function; they are taken as activities outside of work time, and thus there are no responsibilities toward them (i.e., remunerating or guarantee in them).[70]

The description of studio instruction given by interviewees describes a notion of teaching which is reminiscent of an idea of a mentor/teacher as an 'expert presence' in the studio. For example:

> MILES: [Y]ou could talk to the tutor about it and he would show you how to use the ruler and he'd say "Well be careful when you change the blades" But there wasn't strict classes in it [...] it was observation.

> MEGHAN: [I]t's more one-to-one than 'academic' prepared lectures where you just go through last year's - there's more to it than that but you are just more involved every day. Kind of informal tutorials and not just what's on the timetable.

Contemporary studio-based instruction, argues Phelan, emerges from a

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[69] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler, p. 131.
[70] Maribel Casas-Cortés, 'A Genealogy of Precarity: A Toolbox for Rearticulating Fragmented Social Realities in and out of the Workplace', *Rethinking Marxism*, 26.2 (2014), 206–26 (p. 212).

Bauhaus tradition which challenges directive modes of art education; 'Traditional art training taught the artist how to make a work of art. The Bauhaus examined what was in it'.[71] The Bauhaus tradition emphasises processual, intellectual and material aspects of making and the studio-based pedagogy reflects this. Bisha, in an unpublished doctoral thesis, identifies the key components of this tradition in studio-based instruction. First, teachers briefly demonstrate an approach or technique. Then, students work on assignments (the 'studio' time) while instructors gave individualised feedback or, occasionally, group feedback. Most modules end with a critique of student work.[72] I argued in chapter two that place-based and embodied pedagogies engage students in processes of observation and learning by doing, in a form that is 'fundamentally social'.[73] However, Shreeve *et al*. suggest that there may be threats to studio instruction from 'the growing hegemony of uniform expectations about higher education practices, driven in part by the growth of quality assurance procedures in the UK'.[74] In the next section, I will analyse interviewee responses to quality assurance mechanisms.

3.1.6 Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Higher Education

Meghan describes the quality assurance mechanisms as a 'juggernaut'. She seems overwhelmed by processes associated with quality assurance; 'just so knee-deep in it. It's like treacle - aghhhhh!'. Ball describes this as a feature of the neoliberal university, and associated with what he calls 'performativity':

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[71] Andrew Phelan, 'The Bauhaus and Studio Art Education', *Art Education*, 34.5 (1981), 6–13 (p. 7).
[72] David Bisha, 'Developing the Modern Scene Design Process: Cognition and the New Stagecraft' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2015), p. 217.
[73] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler, p. 133.
[74] Shreeve, Sims, and Trowler, p. 126.

> Within the rigours and disciplines of performativity we are required to spend increasing amounts of our time in making ourselves accountable, reporting on what we do rather than doing it…as we adapt ourselves to the challenges of reporting and recording our practice, social structures and social relations are replaced by informational structures.[75]

This contrasts with Andrew's recollections of being taught on the Motley course; 'You do need to put it down on paper and of course at Motley there wasn't really much on paper, there was no evidence of a course'.

The need to define learning outcomes prior to validation, suggests David, creates some barriers to engaging learners in the co-construction of learning outcomes, something he sees as valuable in creative arts subjects. The experience of being involved in a programme validation process had created, for Jane, the notion of a 'hidden curriculum' which was somehow more real and relevant to the practice of design/scenography than that represented in programme documentation. For Jane, there is a dissonance between the real curriculum and the representation of the real. Similarly, Matthew talks about the 'clandestine university' that stands in opposition to the 'official university', which he describes as a form of 'resistance'. Matthew's reference comes from an article by Thomas Docherty in the Times Higher Educational Supplement (THES), who argues that the 'Official University' is concerned with 'transparency and information', whereas the 'Clandestine University' is concerned with 'truth and critical knowledge', or as he puts is 'The Official University polishes its windows, but it no longer attends to the life within'.[76]

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[75] Ball, p. 19.
[76] Thomas Docherty, 'The Unseen Academy', *Times Higher Education*, 10 November 2011 <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/the-unseen-academy/418076.article> [accessed 1 May 2018].

Harvey proposes that the neo-liberalising structures imposed on universities by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s included 'strict rules of surveillance, financial accountability, and productivity on to institutions'.[77] One of the consequences of increased surveillance and accountability is that transparency becomes a proxy for 'truth'. However, Wakefield and Walton argue that 'Transparency is not the same thing as truth […] transparency reveals fact much more often than it reveals truth'.[78] Furthermore, the conditions under which something is made transparent create the conditions for either trust or distrust between teachers and students. Rowena's example of the dialogic approaches to feedback and student distrust of 'mark sheets', illustrates that students welcome a voluntary and social approach to feedback, but it is not clear whether this is particular to design/scenography students. As Wakefield and Walton observe, transparency may be perceived as more 'trustworthy' when it is voluntary, and less 'trustworthy' when it is involuntary.[79] It is interesting to note that many of the course leaders said that they, and students, value the formative feedback given to students by professional designer/scenographers and directors. Jane relates this to her experiences as a student of the Motley course, where 'real professionals' gave feedback to students. John calls it 'the old fashioned crit'. Critiques or 'crits' in art and design, are an important aspect of relational pedagogy, because art and design is not concerned with 'doing' activity but with praxis.[80] Crits bring together the creator or an art

[77] Harvey, p. 61.
[78] Robert I. Wakefield and Susan B Walton, 'The Translucency Corollary: Why Full Transparency Is Not Always the Most Ethical Approach' (Institute for Public Relations, 2010), pp. 870–88 (p. 880).
[79] Wakefield and Walton, p. 874..
[80] Belkis Uluog, 'Design Knowledge Communicated in Studio Critiques', *Design Studies*, 21 (2000), 33–58 (p. 34).

work, the created artefact, and someone to critique the work. Sometimes, there may be an audience (usually other students on the programme) but crits may also be private.[81] Crits provide a space for honest conversations between teachers and students, and recreate professional conditions outside the academy where 'there is rarely time for sugar-coated feedback'.[82] It is perhaps in these real spaces, either in the notion of 'old-fashioned crit', or in the teaching and learning that takes place, as Jane puts it, 'once the door's shut', where surveillance mechanisms cannot penetrate. Matthew perceives the concept of the hidden/clandestine university as a symbol of 'resistance' because it might supplant, to use Ball's phrase, the 'performative professional'[83] with a human and social notion of the teacher/mentor.

3.1.7 Conclusion

It appears that the marketisation of higher education, and associated technicist mechanisms, hinders those signature pedagogies associated with arts education. A range of mechanisms have been introduced into higher education to introduce transparency into teaching, learning and assessment practices. For the interviewees in this study, some of these surveillance mechanisms have been restrictive, frustrating and, in some contexts, created distrust between students and academic staff. For most interviewees, the introduction of tuition fees has created a climate in which students are reluctant to engage in assessed group work and feel unable to take risks because they fear the consequences of failure. This climate creates

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[81] Terry Barrett, 'Studio Critiques of Student Art: As They Are, as They Could Be with Mentoring', *Theory into Practice*, 39.1 (2000), 29–35 (p. 29).
[82] Jon Kolko, 'Endless Nights: Learning from Design Studio Critique', *Interactions*, 18.2 (2011), 80–81 (p. 80).
[83] Ball, p. 19.

barriers to students developing essential skills for design/scenography, identified by the interviewees as 'communication' and 'collaboration'. There is evidence to support interviewees' concerns that marketisation has negative consequences for social equality in participation in design/scenography education. For some interviewees, there is a disconnect between *official* representations of curricula and *clandestine* design/scenography curricula.

Now that I have analysed how neoliberal ideas are present in higher education policy and how this shapes the design/scenography curriculum, I will now analyse themes arising from interviews associated with context of arts funding policy, and professional practice in design/scenography.

3.2 Arts Funding Policy and Design/Scenography Education

3.2.1 UK Arts Funding Policy

Interviewees referred to Government cuts to arts funding and the negative effect on graduate career opportunities. Sal and Meghan, and David suggest that this contributes to the decline of permanent designer/scenographer jobs. John calls it a 'perpetual crisis', which started with Tony Blair's Labour Government, which has been perpetuated through 'austerity' measures, implemented by the Coalition Government (2012-2015) and the current Conservative Government. Tomlin's analysis of arts policy suggests that, in fact, New Labour doubled the 'grant-in-aid' funding for the arts.[84] However, the Labour government were, suggests Tomlin, engaged in a 'balancing act between the neoliberal market and the social-

[84] Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, p. 3.

democratic imperative',[85] adopting economic arguments for public investment. Like higher education, the arts were framed as 'an investment' that would yield economic returns, with companies and artists encouraged to seek out alternative sources of funding. This reflects John's experiences at that time:

> [T]here are a lot of people who looked elsewhere for funding and not just for funding but where to take theatre and this coincided with this different emphasis on types of forms of theatre making and so to such an extent that people were looking to the NHS for performance funding and all sorts of things.

Tomlin argues that conceptualising the arts as an economic investment reduced artistic practice to an instrumentalist role in society, restricting the potential of art practice to critique, disrupt or challenge.[86] Sal and Meghan, and David raise the concern that students preferred musical theatre. David does not see this as a positive thing, associating it with what he calls 'the X Factor generation'; a television talent and entertainment competition. He makes the distinction between musical theatre that he describes as 'political', for example 'Brecht and Weill', and those which are not, such as 'West End', and the musical '*Wicked!*'.

Hesmondhalgh *et al*. document the marketisation of the arts. They suggest that between 1945 and the 1960s, public arts funding policy was weighted towards subsidising forms of art production that were 'historically and […] spiritually' significant […] part of national or even global heritage'.[87] They suggest that modernists of the sixties and seventies attacked the use of public money to support already-privileged institutions. During the recession in the 1970s it became

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[85] Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, p. 34.
[86] Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, p. 6.
[87] David Hesmondhalgh and others, 'Were New Labour's Cultural Policies Neo-Liberal?', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21.1 (2015), 97–114 (p. 108).

increasingly difficult to defend this policy, and so in the 1980s, arts organisations increasingly used economic justifications for public funding of the arts, focussing on the 'contribution of cultural goods to generating money for national, regional and local economies through tourism and other means'.[88]

Today, the arguments used to justify public 'investment' in the arts are paradoxical. Richard Russell, Director of Policy and Research at the Arts Council, in his opening statement to an Arts Council England report in 2015, says that 'public investment in art and culture is a winner. The sector grows each year yet costs us less and is more productive'.[89] It is unclear whether a 'more with less' argument ensures a sustainable future for the arts and, as this study indicates, may have negative outcomes for professional careers in the arts.

3.2.2 Precarity: Agency, Pedagogy and Curriculum

In the next part of the analysis, I examine a recurring theme that emerged from the interviews; that of precarity and precarious working conditions in the performing arts. Then I will relate this to examples of where pedagogies and curricula of those interviewed for this study, have embedded precarity as a structural given in design/scenography education.

An important moment during the interview with Meghan and Sal was when they discussed the phenomena of unpaid work in design/scenography:

Meghan:	You have to do a week of R&D [Research and Development] which you might not get paid for

[88] Hesmondhalgh and others, p. 108.
[89] Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), *Contribution of the Arts and Culture Industry to the National Economy (Research Report)*, 2015 <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Contribution-of-the-arts-and-culture-sector-to-the-national-economy-CEBR-July-2015.pdf> [accessed 1 May 2018].

	and that you know [...] it's very, very, you know [...]what's the word?
Sal:	Precarious?
Meghan:	Yes! That's the word!

It is interesting that Sal chose the word 'precarious' to describe the working conditions experienced by professional designer/scenographers. Casas-Cortés, explains that the etymological Latin root of 'precarity' is 'prex or precis' which means 'to pray, to plead'.[90] She argues that the term emerged in the 1990s in response to deregulation and casualisation in employment markets, which occurred as a consequence of globalisation.[91] Similarly, Neilson and Coté suggest that precarity emerges from a disconnection of labour from 'wage setting systems', and processes of 'dispute and arbitration' over pay.[92] Standing devised the term 'precariat' to describe a new class of precarious workers, conflating 'precarity' with 'proletariat'. However, unlike the proletariat, the precariat does not enjoy 'a bargain of trust or security in exchange for subordination'.[93] This removes potential for resistance, according to Neilson and Coté, because precarity disrupts social bonds established through shared working conditions, geography or class. Precarity produces 'free wage labour', which enables 'capital to transform labour power into a commodity'.[94] Kunst argues that precarization arises as a direct consequence of neoliberal governance:

> [T]he neoliberal act of governance that governs through social insecurity, flexibility and continuous fear arising from the loss of

[90] Casas-Cortés, p. 207.
[91] Casas-Cortés, p. 209.
[92] Brett Neilson and Mark Coté, 'Introduction: Are We All Cultural Workers Now?', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 7.1 (2014), 2–11 (p. 8).
[93] Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), LIII, p. 8.
[94] Neilson and Coté, pp. 4–5.

> stability. Precarization is also at the core of the specific production of subjectivity, where ontological aspects of subjectivity (its potentiality, vulnerability, temporality, inclination to change) are economized. Consequently, precarization as such becomes one of the main forms of social existence.[95]

The loss of stability caused by neoliberal governance mechanisms mean that there is no longer a separation between the private life of the self, and the public world of work. As Neilson and Coté put it, there is 'a tendency for work to colonise more of life', which means that it may not be possible to draw a distinction between precarious work, and the precarious self.[96] In the next part of the chapter I will examine precarity in the context of design/scenography work.

3.2.3 Precarity And Design/Scenography Work

Gill suggests that precarity is associated with 'a meritocratic myth' of 'cool, creative egalitarianism' in the creative arts.[97] The paradigmatic shift towards precarity is complex because it appears to offer some positive outcomes, such as a flexibility, informality and autonomy,[98] but inequalities are poorly managed because they fall beyond the purview of legislation designed to ensure equal opportunities and pay, and have disproportionately negative effects on some social groups more than others.[99] Tomlin suggests that the 'self-directed mentality of artists' engaged in freelance work is suited to a creative economy.[100] Gill suggests

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[95] Kunst, p. 6.
[96] Neilson and Coté, p. 3.
[97] Rosalind Gill, 'Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Euro', *Information, Communication & Society*, 5.1 (2002), 70–89 (p. 86).
[98] Gill, 'Cool, Creative and Egalitarian?', p. 86.
[99] Bridget Conor, Rosalind Gill, and Stephanie Taylor, 'Gender and Creative Labour', *Sociological Review*, 63.S1 (2015), 1–22 (p. 9).
[100] Tomlin, *British Theatre Companies 1995-2014*, p. 7.

that precarity is endemic within the arts because it is associated with the 'privilege' of working for a particular arts institution and bound up with a culture of what Gill *et al*. call 'DWYL', or 'Do What You Love'.[101] In this culture, questioning pay or conditions is in 'bad taste' because it calls commitment into question.[102] One of the interviewees, John, presents a bleak picture of the availability of secure and stable work in design/scenography:

> It was slightly masked for some time but there's no longer any masking now. There is literally nothing. I know that sounds really apocalyptic and doom laden, but I think it is that bad!

Other interviewees raise similar concerns, with suggestions how the academy might inoculate students against precarity, as Andrew notes:

> We need a hub which is for students who are leaving, that connects to what you need to know outside. This is just on the surface of starting to address that situation which has been a concern of mine which is that it's all fine and fun being here but what happens when they step out in two years' time?

This provides the context for interviewee explanations for introducing flexibility into the curriculum, including training in a range of different fields. However, it is perhaps worth noting that the interviewees themselves entered teaching as a response to precarious conditions of work in design/scenography. In the next part I will examine the reasons interviewees give for entering teaching in higher education.

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[101] Conor, Gill, and Taylor, p. 2.
[102] Gill, 'Academics, Cultural Workers and Critical Labour Studies', p. 15.

3.2.4 Precarity and the Academy

Isackes suggests that the academy has played a role in subsidising professional work in design/scenography:

> Those of us who were committed to working in live theatre figured out sooner or later that jobs in colleges and universities not only offered decent salaries and benefits but, in most cases, encouraged us to continue parallel careers in the professional regional theatre – a sector that to an increasing degree was supported either directly or indirectly by colleges and universities.[103]

Earlier, I introduced Clarke's metaphor of the refugee, to describe creative practitioners seeking shelter in the academy:

> [L]ike many practitioners working in modes of theatre and performance that are not readily commercialized and funded precariously, project by project […] I stole away and took economic and cultural refuge in the university.[104]

Every interviewee entered teaching by invitation from others within their professional networks. The reasons they give for entering teaching reflect the experiences of Isackes and Clarke. For David, the experience of 'sleeping in the back of a transit' led him to pursue teaching as a more stable form of work. Matthew's move into teaching was influenced by the cuts to public arts funding in the 1980s by the Thatcher-led Conservative Government, and his experiences of changes in work availability and stability. For all of the female interviewees and implied in the interview with one of the male interviewees, precarious work was described as incompatible with having a family. Meghan says that women tend to choose 'teaching and things like that'. Similarly, Rowena explains that 'having

[103] Isackes, 'The Design Dilemma', p. 40.
[104] Clarke, p. 115.

children and being fully focused on a freelance theatre design career are a little incompatible'. It is perhaps worth noting here that for women, there are particular consequences associated with working freelance. For example, Gill suggests that in most European countries freelance work impacts entitlement to maternity benefits. She further draws attention to the phenomenon of 'second-jobbing' and 'multi-jobbing' of creative workers in teaching or in the hospitality industries.[105]

In the next part of the analysis, I turn to an examination of how pedagogies and curricula embed the notion of the professional network, as a way to navigate precarity.

3.2.5 The Professional Network: 'Network Sociality'

Most interviewees referred to a professional network, comprised of designer/scenographers and directors. I have already noted the ways in which interviewees' entry to teaching was facilitated by others in their professional networks. It is perhaps worth observing, at this point, the regularity with which the Motley Theatre Design Course was referred to in the interviews. For example; Andrew, Jane and Sal were graduates of the Motley course and Miles was taught by Richard Negri at Wimbledon School of Art, who was a student of Motley when he studied the theatre design course at the Old Vic Theatre Company. I did not expect to find so many connections to the Motley course, but the Motley philosophy continues in design/scenography education, in a range of institutions. However, it is not the purpose of this study to explore and expand on these connections, and I

[105] Gill, 'Academics, Cultural Workers and Critical Labour Studies', p. 15.

identify this as an area for further research in the conclusion to this thesis.

However, a more general notion of the importance of the professional network is embedded in every course. For example, Andrew's narrative is saturated with references to an extended professional network; the reference to 'those that know', the portraits of patrons lining the walls of the meeting where the interview took place, the policy of patronage that enables students to follow a 'no work' rule and the 'Motley lineage'. Sal and Meghan refer to the importance of students leaving with 'an amazing contact book' and Rowena's chosen object, of the end of year book, serves as a kind of formal presentation of new graduates to the professional network; a 'coming out'.

The notion of the professional network matters in the context of neoliberal work patterns. For example, Wittel describes a feature of precarity called 'network sociality', which he contrasts with notions of 'community'. Community is characterised by 'stability, coherence, embeddedness and belonging'. In contrast, 'network sociality' is characterised by short-term shallow relations, 'created on a project-by-project basis', that combines 'work and play'.[106] As Harvey observes, precarious labour entails the loss of democratic institutions, replacing these with informal networks as a means to construct social solidarities.[107] However, this does not automatically imply equality through solidarity, but through competition. Gill suggests that informal networks create 'reputation economies', where 'life is a pitch'.[108] Andrew objects to this, saying, 'Hang on, we're not architects, we don't

[106] Andreas Wittel, 'Toward a Network Sociality', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18.6 (2001), 51–76 (p. 51).
[107] Harvey, p. 171.
[108] Gill, 'Academics, Cultural Workers and Critical Labour Studies', p. 16.

bid for jobs!' Kunst describes this as 'the peculiar experience of a socialized isolation' where mutually dependent individuals exist in a competitive network.[109]

Andrew comments that 'The problem with education is that it separates you and the world out there'. A common dimension in the design/scenography courses in this study is the attempt to ease transitions between study and professional work. Some courses have attempted to do this by working with arts organisations to facilitate student placements. However, as Andrew observes, many of those opportunities are no longer available, perhaps as those institutions, (Andrew cites The National Theatre, The BBC) themselves become more precarious. Courses in this study address this by introducing a 'proxy' professionalism into the course through the involvement of visiting professionals, visiting lecturers, or students working on imagined projects with real directors; similar to what Jane and Andrew refer to as 'the Motley Projects'. This proxy professionalism is largely facilitated through course leader networks. Networks are also facilitated through what Rowena refers to as 'the very secret kind of world of design competitions'. These fora often, paradoxically, occupy a space away from performance making, because they are conceived as being for designer/scenographers, and about design/scenography.

3.2.6 Design/Scenography Competitions and Exhibitions

There are three significant competitions and exhibitions which UK designer/scenographers participate in; the Linbury Prize, The World Stage Design Exhibition and the Prague Quadrennial. The 'World Stage Design' exhibition and

[109] Kunst, p. 8.

competition is organised by OISTAT: The International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians.[110] It describes itself as 'designer-focused', with individual designers from around the world submitting exhibits. Exhibitors can win a gold, silver or bronze medal. The Linbury Prize is described by organisers as 'The UK's most prestigious award for Stage Design',[111] and is a forum for early career designers. In the case of the Linbury Prize, the separation of design from performance provides designers with the opportunity to produce design/scenography, without their authorship being compromised or appropriated by others in the performance making process. As Rowena explains:

> [T]he Linbury allows a kind of nirvana like situation where there's a certain amount of budget that's allocated for the set and that cannot be compromised into something else like the actors, the programme. It's Nirvana!

The Prague Quadrennial (PQ) started as an exhibition in 1967. The aim of the first exhibition was to 'capture the specificity of stage design, the inseparability of scenography from the direction and all other components of a dramatic work, and the synthetic nature of this field.'[112] The PQ is an international competition, with countries competing against one another. Through this, designer/scenographers receive public recognition for their work. In the previous ten years, the PQ has seen a shift from design/scenography for performance, to design/scenography as performance, with a growth of performance related exhibits, in preference to the display of models and drawings.

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[110] OISAT, 'OISTAT: World Stage Design 2017', 2016 <http://www.wsd2013.com/blog-category/world-stage-design-2017-comes-to-taiwan/> [accessed 30 May 2016].
[111] 'The Linbury Prize', 2015 <http://www.linburyprize.org.uk/> [accessed 1 May 2018].
[112] Arts and Theatre Institute and Prague Quadrennial, p. 8.

The history of the PQ has contributed to the development of expansive notions of design/scenography. The PQ arose from geographical and political circumstances in communist Czechoslovakia, after World War II. Theatres were subject to strict censorship rules, but these rules were primarily concerned with script rather than performance. This created a climate where Czech designer/scenographers used design/scenography to articulate an alternative 'text'. Brockett *et al*. describe this as 'action design',[113] where design/scenography becomes another performer:

> These elements of design do not subvert the role or power of the actor, but instead create a kind of "other" actor - another voice and a richer web of signs, all reacting with and against one another.[114]

The PQ has taken place every four years since its inception and continues to provide an international focus for design/scenography. Today, the PQ exemplifies a paradox. It was established as a forum in which the authorship of designer/scenographers would be recognised, and today embraces expansive, and collaborative, notions of design/scenography that reject the concept of a single author. For example: PQ 2016 was guided by the following conceptualisation of scenography:

> [A] trans-disciplinary practice of the design of performative spaces can no longer be assigned to a singular genre – set design comes to mind - and a singular author.[115]

Design/scenography competitions and exhibitions play an important role in establishing and sustaining networks. However, these networks become more

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[113] Brockett, Mitchell, and Hardberger, p. 295.
[114] Christilles and Unruh, p. 130.
[115] Dehlholm.

important in the context of a neoliberal economy, enabling networked participants 'to gain privileged access to certain lines of employment'.[116]

3.2.7 Design/Scenography Skills

Clarke suggests that one of the consequences of the marketisation of higher education is that learning is 'acquired, transformed into goods and given value [and] exchanged'.[117] These products of cognitive capitalism are realised as assets in the form of 'skills'.[118] Interviewees described a range of skills and behaviours that their courses aim to equip students with.

All interviewees identified model-making skills as important. Most express a preference for a material model compared to virtual model. In chapter two, I noted Gröndahl's observations about the materiality of the model box, where she suggests that it reproduces established relations between spectator and scenography where design/scenography is to be looked at, rather than engaged with (or created) by participant/spectators, and that actors become 'like small figurines in the miniature model'.[119] It is possible that the materiality of the model box is important in design/scenography because it simulates the materiality of live performance. It may also be the case that virtual technologies are not sophisticated enough to reproduce this. But Rowena anticipates that this may change in the future:

> The technology isn't quite easy enough yet but it's on the horizon. It's nearly there. When it becomes a little bit easier to use it will be completely ubiquitous and there won't be models anymore because

[116] Harvey, p. 168.
[117] Clarke, p. 113.
[118] Ewan Ingleby, 'The House That Jack Built: Neoliberalism, Teaching in Higher Education and the Moral Objections', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 20.5 (2015), 518–29 (p. 525).
[119] Gröndahl, 'Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design', p. 12.

> they do take an awfully long time to create.

The model box appears to function as a communication tool, as Meghan suggests 'The model box is just a tool of communication. It is not the end'. Rowena stresses the importance of technical accuracy in model-making, because this should be its primary function. Miles sees the model as primarily a processual aspect of design/scenography:

> [T]he language of designing through a model is much more immediate in some ways. So, you can rip up a piece of paper and put it into a space [...] Once you get people thinking in scale [...] they can make quite quick adjustments.

The materiality of the model box mirrors the materialism of texts; it can be rewritten and deleted in a kind of scenic writing, or the notion of *design as l'écriture scénique*, that I defined in chapter two. Isackes observes that most design/scenography studio instruction is focussed on what he calls the 'meta-objects' of design, but because these are removed from performance contexts, they 'become reified as autonomous art works', rather than 'aggregations of visual information whose meaning is consciously transformed within the totality of a temporal multi textual event'.[120]

Most courses include instruction in practical making skills, including prop making, paint effects, costume design, puppetry and sculpture. These making skills are intended to equip students with, what John describes as 'Three-Dimensional Thinking'. Additionally, most courses also include instruction in technical drawing and ground plans, presumably so that designer/scenographers are able to produce

[120] Isackes, 'On the Pedagogy of Theatre Stage Design: A Critique of Practice', p. 49.

plans for technical staff.

John and Matthew have moved the curriculum away from model-making and costume designs:

> Why can't we continue simply doing that? In many respects I'd like to because that's the way that I learnt […] I think that if we're going to reflect contemporary - not just theatre design practice - but contemporary theatre practice then we have look at it more broadly and holistically.

Sal and Meghan, and Matthew suggest that representations of design/scenography should move away from the model box, as Matthew says 'They're useful but they're just artefacts […] They are not our product. They're not the thing we really have to understand'. Sal and Meghan refer to this as 'the fourth dimension' in design/scenography or 'the unification of space and time', which the model box does not adequately capture.

3.2.8 Skills for Precarity

Many of the interviewees spoke about the importance of equipping students with the behaviours, skills and attitudes required to navigate precarious conditions in professional work. For example, they talked about the need for courses to teach 'business start-up' skills, to enable students to initiate and sustain a performance company once they graduate. Andrew suggests that the curriculum should prepare students for the realities of work such as 'actually how you run a company'. John says, 'If one is going to be honest, the work isn't there, but at least some of them have formed a company'. Sal and Meghan comment that the most likely form of employment for graduates is self-initiated 'start-up companies'. Interviewees also described a range of skills that were embedded in pedagogies and curricula,

implicitly and explicitly, and were concerned with supporting the transition to professional practice. Andrew describes professional success as being a question of survival; 'By hook or by crook they'll survive'. Interviewees highlighted aspects of the hidden curriculum that prepare students for precarious work. For example, Sal said that the need to be 'proactive' to find work is something that is 'buried in discussions' with students. Similarly, Rowena emphasised the attributes of 'cheerfulness' and of 'being creative but not annoyingly creative' and that it was important to 'not cry […] not be upset', 'if your face doesn't fit'. Furthermore, Miles emphasised the need for students to learn to be 'dependable' and 'hardworking', and Andrew emphasised 'resourcefulness'.

Hidden curricula and tacit pedagogies appear to embed the notion of what Harvey calls a 'personal responsibility system'.[121] Survival seems to be dependent upon what Kunst refers to as a kind of 'self-immunization'[122] by adopting behaviours and skills to navigate and survive precarious work/life, such as the embrace of non-waged work.[123] As Harvey argues, in neoliberal economies, 'personal failure is generally attributed to personal failings'.[124]

To navigate precarious conditions of work, curricula and pedagogies appear to position the graduate designer/scenographer between what Huws calls 'Begging and bragging'[125] or pitching for work whilst sublimating aspects of self. As Rowena says, one should aim to be 'creative but not annoyingly creative'. The emphasis on hard work and long hours embedded within both Miles' and Andrew's curriculum

[121] Harvey, p. 168.
[122] Kunst, p. 10.
[123] Casas-Cortés, p. 212.
[124] Harvey, p. 76.
[125] Huws, p. 31.

reflects the intensity of freelance work. Pratt uses the term 'bulimic careers' to describe the experiences of freelance workers who, afraid to turn down a job, instead work in 'boom and bust' patterns, until they fear 'burnout'.[126]

The marketisation of the arts from the 1980s onwards, has contributed towards an environment where precarious work is accepted as a structural given. This study of contemporary design/scenography courses suggests that the impact of this may be felt and seen in the skills and competencies associated with design/scenography work, that are embedded in the design/scenography curriculum. It may also be apparent in the pedagogies of the professional designer/scenographer 'refugees' who have chosen to work within the academy as a response to their own precarious experiences as designer/scenographers. In the conclusion to this chapter, I will address the research questions of the study.

4. Chapter Six Conclusion

So far, I have attempted to do two things in this chapter. First, I have endeavoured to maintain each whole narrative by providing a summary description of each. Then, I have conducted a thematic analysis of narratives. I conclude that one of the most significant factors impacting on the expression and enactment of agency on contemporary design/scenography courses, are neoliberal mechanisms which have contributed to the constitution of precarious subjectivities of design/scenography students, and designer/scenographers. Aspects of precarity are evident in curricula and pedagogies of the courses included in this study, and these

[126] Andy C Pratt, 'New Media, the New Economy and New Spaces', *Geoforum*, 31.4 (2000), 425–36 (p. 432).

impact particularly on the signature pedagogies that I identified in chapter two of this thesis. In this conclusion, I will address the following research questions:

- How does design/scenography education position designer/scenographers in the organisation of performance making?
- How does design/scenography education express and enact designer/scenographer agency?
- Is there a relationship between designer/scenographer positionality in performance making, and the expression and enactment of designer/scenographer agency, in design/scenography education?

4.1 Positionality: In Service to a Text and Performance Making Hierarchy

Andrew, Jane and Miles' courses place text at the centre of the design/scenography process, and the role of the designer/scenographer is positioned in service to the text. It is perhaps notable that all three interviewees work in institutions that could be described as conservatoires, but that are now affiliated with HEI's. Similarly, both Andrew and Jane trained at the Motley Theatre Design Course. Furthermore, Miles received instruction from someone trained on the earlier iteration of the course at the Old Vic Theatre School. Andrew describes this approach as 'designing through the text'. This conceptualisation of design/scenography conceives of design/scenography as being for performance, and has features of the discursive frames that I defined in chapter two, namely *design/scenography as 'l'ecriture scenique'*, where mise-en-scéne is not an faithful

and literal execution of the text, but its discovery'.[127] This conceptualisation of design/scenography is represented to varying degrees, on all the courses that were included in this study.

Andrew describes the collaborations between designer/scenographer and director, in this approach to design/scenography, as an equal partnership; like 'a good game of tennis'. This was the sentiment expressed by one of the panel participants at the *Transformations of Prague Quadrennial from 1999-2015* symposium, that I attended in 2016. He was responding to another panel member who had suggested that designer/scenographers were subjugated in the process of 'traditional' performance making, and I made a note of his comment:

> It's not about theatre anymore. This is not about Czech stage design, this [PQ] is about something strange. It is controlled anarchy. I enjoy hierarchy, a solid team of people. In my life I have worked with many directors. None of them said this is what I think now go and do it. It was about trust. He has trust in me and I had trust in him.

In this arrangement, collaborators have clearly defined and bounded identities and therefore occupy particular territories in performance making. The expression of designer/scenographer agency is restricted to an occupational territory, expressed through the text and in negotiation with the director. The agency therefore reflects what Eteläpelto *et al*. define as 'identity agency':

> [T]he habitual patterning of social behavior [that] captures the identity commitments we have internalized. These identity commitments motivate our actions, and we exercise agency in the very performance of those identities.[128]

The roles of director and designer are conceived of as equal collaborators but

[127] Pavis, p. 118.
[128] Eteläpelto and others, p. 58.

are not equally visible in the authorship of productions. The implication being that their contribution to performance making is sublimated to that of the director and text. It appears that precarious working conditions arising from neoliberalism may have destabilised the bounded occupational territory occupied by the designer/scenographer in this particular conceptualisation of design/scenography, as one of the interviewees observes:

> All work is freelance and they're [students] amazed that there used to be the rep system where you would have a designer and a deputy designer and head of a whole team. I don't think there's one theatre now that does that. The trouble is that there isn't that learning career path.

Meghan makes the point here that there are no permanent jobs or theatre companies that, at one time, would have provided occupational career progression for someone defined as a 'designer' or 'deputy designer'.

Like Meghan, many of the course leaders describe a conceptualisation of design/scenography and designer/scenographer which is expansive and collaborative, in apparently non-hierarchical forms of performance making. For example, Andrew notes the move away from text-based work, in the Linbury prize. John describes the erosion and breaking up of a 'whole thing called theatre design or scenography or design for performance'. Rowena describes it as being 'on a knife-edge'. Matthew talks about the importance of an 'interdisciplinary attitude' in design/scenography education.

This conceptualisation of design/scenography conceives of design/scenography *as* performance and has features of discursive frames that I defined in chapter two. The discursive frame of *design/scenography as*

'vagrancy',[129] is apparent as design/scenography literally expands into found and site-specific spaces (a move that Meghan describes as 'radical'), and designer/scenographers occupy different and multiple roles within performance making. This conceptualisation reflects what Lehmann refers to as the 'de-hierarchisation of theatrical means' and associated 'parataxis'; a non-hierarchical, pluralistic approach to performance making.[130]

On some of the courses in this study, designer/scenographers are conceived as collaborative creators who may devise performance experiences. For example, John's course positions designer/scenographers as authors and arrangers of performance material through the form of verbatim theatre. Sal and Meghan's course engages students with devised performance. Matthew's course emphasises authorship and, as he explains, there is a difference between 'authoring work and theatre design […] which is not the same as authoring your own work'. On this course performance is subject to critical examination *through* the medium of 'theatre design'.

4.2 The Expression and Enactment of Agency

The occupation of different territories in performance making facilitates the expression and enactment of 'authorial agency', to use Isackes term. In some cases, authorial agency can be said to be owned by an individual, as in the case of Jane's gallery-based performance environments, and Matthew's street performances. Both of these examples exhibit features of the discursive frame of *design/scenography*

[129] Benedict Anderson, p. 109.
[130] Lehmann, p. 86.

as encounter. In other contexts, authorial agency is dispersed. For example, on John's course. This could be described as proxy agency, 'where multiple participants negotiate as they interact with and co-operate or struggle with each other'.[131] This is similar to Irwin's notion of 'agential realism', where agency is exercised through relationships with others; an 'intra-active agency'.[132] This notion implies fluidity in occupational territory and challenges whether it is necessary to carve out occupational territories at all.

4.3 Precarity and Curriculum

Design/scenography curricula accommodate expansive and destabilised forms of performance making and this may be, in part, a response to precarity in professional practice. In this environment, design/scenography education emphasises flexibility and adaptability. As Souleles observes, this is a tendency that is emerging across the art and design curriculum, and students are increasingly being equipped to respond to situations where 'it is necessary to use expertise without being an expert'.[133] Equipping students to work in different roles, in a variety of different contexts by embedding the behaviours and skills required to navigate freelance work, the academy may be redefining design/scenography as much as it is responding to what is happening beyond the academy, in a mutual process of structuration. As Baugh suggests:

> [T]he marketplace of this theatre also determined the syllabus of

[131] King, p. 259.
[132] Irwin, p. 120.
[133] Nicos Souleles, 'The Evolution of Art and Design Pedagogies in England: Influences of the Past, Challenges for the Future', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 32.2 (2013), 243–55 (p. 253).

> training; and that syllabus, in turn, determined the artistic values and attitudes of the work itself - a virtuous circle of artistic supply based upon precise artistic demand.[134]

4.4 Precarity and Pedagogy

Three of the participants; Andrew, Jane and Meghan, all trained at the Motley Theatre Design Course. Andrew and Jane, in particular, adopt folk pedagogies shaped by the training they received at Motley, and by their subsequent professional experience. Furthermore, Miles was educated in an environment that would have been informed by the pedagogy and curriculum of Motley, through the embodied pedagogies of Miles' teachers who were themselves taught by Motley. There is evidence on all the courses in this study of place-based pedagogy; whether in the context of social learning in the studio environment, so central to Sal and Meghan's relational practices in the studio, or through the exposure to professional practices in and beyond the institution. These signature pedagogies are evident despite the effect of neoliberal technicist models of learning, that appear to confound and interrupt social constructivist modes of learning. For example, Jane uses the tactic of a 'hidden curriculum', smuggled into the institution and taught behind 'closed doors', that bears only some resemblance to the official documentation associated with the course. Sal and Meghan, and Rowena foster relational pedagogies by being located in the studio, available to students for most of the working day. But place-based pedagogies are under pressure, with Sal and Meghan being forced to defend studio instruction that is not written down, measured and accounted for. At Matthew's institution, the studio space in a newly refurbished building is

[134] Baugh, 'English Scenography, Education and the Public Purse', p. 126.

diminutive when contrasted with an atrium that is populated by shops and cafes. Furthermore, Andrew recounts the increasing competition for placements, and the reluctance and/or ability of arts organisations to provide placements for students, whilst John notes the increasing inequality between opportunities available to students in the capital and those in the regions. Therefore the signature pedagogies that are most closely associated with the creative and performing arts, and that are apparent in the Motley case study, appear to be confounded by neoliberal, technicist notions of education and learning. Prentki and Simpson's observation about the school arts curriculum, could also be said of design/scenography higher education today:

> [O]ur curriculum constantly pulls in the opposite, anti-social, competitive, individualised direction, teaching atomised, individual young people how to succeed in a failing world. The leading educational philosophers of the twentieth century – Dewey, Vygotsky, Freire – have long since offered founding principles for a different, humane curriculum but those charged with designing and implementing school curricula, remain largely impervious to their implications for progressive education.[135]

In the conclusion to this thesis, I reflect upon this dissonance further, proposing strategies that challenge, and foreground the precarious subjectivities of teachers and learners, that are shaped by neoliberal policies and discourses.

[135] Prentki and Stinson, p. 4.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis I explained that the aim of the study was to examine what it means to be a designer/scenographer, to do design/scenography and to consider how this has changed. The thesis opened with a quote from Pavelka, that exemplifies how some occupational labels, like 'scenographer', disrupt power and hierarchy in performance making. This study has explored this phenomena from the perspective of design/scenography education by examining how education conceptualises what design/scenography is, the perceived position that designer/scenographers occupy in performance making, and how the conceived agentic identities are enabled or constrained as a consequence of that positionality. In this concluding chapter, I address each of the research questions that guide the study, identifying findings, limitations, further research and reiterate claims for original contributions to knowledge. Finally, I reflect upon a particular finding that emerges from the contrast between the Motley case study and the study of contemporary design/scenography courses. This concerns the impact of neoliberal higher education policy in the current context, on the signature pedagogies observed on the Motley course.

2. Research Questions and Findings

2.1 Question One: When and Why Did It Become Necessary for Design/Scenography to Be Taught in the UK?

The first research question examines the emergence of design/scenography education in the UK. This question was addressed in chapter four, through discussion of the theatre company/school model of the London Theatre Studio, led

by Michel Saint-Denis. I showed how the core values and practices of the Motley course were shaped by Saint-Denis' philosophy at the London Theatre Studio. Then, in chapter five, I demonstrated how the Motley 'principles' were embedded in the pedagogy and curriculum of the Motley Course. There are three findings that emerge from the first research question:

1. There is an absence of scholarly literature concerned with the history of design/scenography education in the UK.
2. Education was central to the professionalisation of the occupational role of the designer/scenographer at the London Theatre Studio in the 1930s.
3. There are signature pedagogies associated with the teaching and learning philosophy on the Motley Theatre Design Course.

2.1.1 Absences in Design/Scenography Education

My thesis supports Essin's argument that those who contribute to performance making, from 'offstage spaces', are also hidden in, or absent from, the archive.[1] There is a gendered dimension associated with visibility and this contributes to the 'disappearing act'[2] of those occupying these roles. Furthermore, as I have shown in chapter two, processes of design/scenography have been made invisible through the repetition of techniques in education, as Gröndahl suggests, 'We also adopt certain methods of doing the job. The better we succeed, the more invisible these methods become to us'.[3] These absences contributed directly to my development of the object elicitation method, and this constitutes the first claim to knowledge that this thesis makes. In chapters three and five I showed how I developed the object

[1] Essin, p. 33.
[2] Fletcher, p. 11.
[3] Gröndahl, 'Redefining Scenographic Strategies', p. 4.

elicitation method to reconstruct the Motley Course. The method was effective at prompting memory, because objects have the quality of punctum that Barthes associates with photographs. Barthes describes the temporal dimension of punctum as being the past object in the present moment, or noeme.[4] This quality of the objects facilitated participant reflection upon the passage of time between the object in the past moment, and the object in the present moment. This method appears to situate the interviewee differently from the oral history method. For example, Holstein suggests that oral history accounts are bound by 'atemporalilty' where the speaker's identity becomes fixed in the present moment. The narrative then becomes one of cause and effect leading to the present identity.[5] The object method did not fix the speaker's identity in the present moment because the object exists in both past and present temporalities, and therefore is a tangible connection to past and present identity. Gale and Featherstone suggest that the purpose of the archive is to contribute to the process of 'cultural meaning', where 'we understand our present and conceptualise our future'.[6] I propose that individuals construct personal archives by selecting and keeping objects. However, the meanings associated with a personal archive may only be understood by the individual who constructs it. The method I developed enables participants to articulate and share personal archives with others by accessing the memories and experiences through a haptic engagement with the objects they own. I anticipate that this method will be of interest to theatre historians, and social scientists interested in narrative inquiry.

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[4] Barthes, p. 96.
[5] Gubrium and Holstein, p. 350.
[6] Maggie B Gale and Ann Featherstone, 'The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research', in Research Methods in Theatre and Performance (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 17–40 (p. 20).

2.1.2 Education and Professionalisation of the Designer

The second finding to emerge from the first research question is that education played an important role in the professionalisation of the designer/scenographer at the London Theatre Studio. In chapter four, I established that the Motley Theatre Design Course emerged from a professionalising tendency in British theatre that began in the period between the wars. I have shown that Saint-Denis used the context of the combined company and school in order to '[raise] the standards of the text-based professional theatre'.[7] This tendency was part of a general trend of professionalisation in the theatre, that the playwright J.B.Preistly called for in 1947; of a theatre of 'serious professional men and women, properly trained'.[8] Rebellato associates the professionalisation of the playwright with a post-world war two 'vision of art grounded in conspicuous prestige'.[9] Therefore, education is implicated in the process of professionalisation. It is interesting to note that distinctions between 'theory' and 'practice', that remain in scholarly debates about theatre and performance, may arise from the professionalisation of the playwright because, as Radosavljević argues, textual and verbal forms have been privileged over embodied and practical knowledge.[10] Therefore, the outcomes of this study support and extend Rebellato's argument regarding professionalisation by documenting the professionalisation of the designer/scenographer. The 'proper training' described by Priestley, requires a curriculum that prescribes approaches to 'theatre design', alongside other elements of performance making. As I have

[7] Baldwin, p. 88.
[8] Gale, p. 44.
[9] Rebellato, p. 47.
[10] Radosavljević, p. 11.

already observed, Saint-Denis insisted upon students becoming 'professionals',[11] with the designer reimagined as a creative collaborator, or 'artist-technician'.[12] There are similarities here with Walter Gropius' notion of the 'artist-workman'.[13] The Bauhaus project sought to unify decoration with object. Similarly, Harris rejected unnecessary 'decoration' in theatre design, a style she associates with Oliver Messel. Instead, the aesthetic of poetic realism that is associated with Motley is minimalist, unified and non-invasive. The aesthetic appears to be informed by Copeau's concept of 'mise à nu' that was influential to Saint-Denis' philosophy of the theatre.[14]

2.1.3 Signature Pedagogies on the Motley Theatre Design Course

The third finding to emerge from the first research question is that there are signature pedagogies associated with the Motley course. In chapter two I showed that these pedagogies emerge from a social constructivist model of education. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Motleys consciously subscribed to *any* model of education. The curriculum was embodied in the teachers, through their constant presence in the studio, and the demonstration of techniques in the studio setting. As one of the interviewees observed, 'The notes were there through them […] rather than a printed handout'. The interviewees recalled the studio as a safe space, and a place of community. The proximity of the professional theatre through the location of the course on theatre premises meant that place-based

[11] Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre: Premises and Promises*, p. 225.
[12] Wardle, p. 69.
[13] Weingarden, p. 10.
[14] Rudlin, p. 43.

pedagogy was also an important dimension of learning. This contributed to strong familial relations between teachers and students that endured beyond the course. Relational pedagogy may also have contributed towards the successful transition of students into a professional network. The course did not result in a recognised qualification, and so, in the absence of a formal certificate, the end of course exhibition flier became the symbolic certificate. In this arrangement learning from failure can be accommodated, because the consequences of failure are to learn how to improve. For example, it was possible for students to fail to meet Harris' standards, as she looked through her 'single spyglass' at a design in production but failure appears to have been bound up with learning, rather than meeting pre-determined course outcomes. Gergen suggests that individual systems of reward and punishment such as those present in technicist approaches to assessment foster mistrust amongst students, and between students and teachers, whereas the collaborative classroom places emphasis on sharing knowledge.[15] Motley alumni described the 'personal' and 'verbal' feedback that was 'shared as a group'. The consequences of failure in the Motley context, were social, rather than individual. Vaughan *et al.* argue that creative activities involve highly ambiguous moments of learning,[16] but the social and relational dimensions of the Motley course appeared to have provided a sense of stability and security to students and, from this position of relative safety, students could take risks and learn from failure.

Therefore, my next claim for an original contribution to knowledge arises from findings in chapter five, where I have identified and articulated the signature

[15] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 201.
[16] Vaughan and others.

pedagogies associated with the Motley course. In so doing, I have addressed a gap in the literature about the history of design/scenography education in the UK, and have contributed to knowledge about the Motley Design Group, the London Theatre Studio and the Motley Course.

The area for further research that arises from the first research question is concerned with the relationship between pedagogy and aesthetic design style. In chapter four, I proposed that the aesthetic of poetic realism arises from designers ceding identity to the text, the authorial imprimatur[17] (or director), the performing body and the bare stage. The Motley design aesthetic that emerges from this is sparse, symbolic and non-invasive. However, further to Harris' claim that this is a signature style associated with graduates of the course,[18] this study does not provide sufficient evidence to support Harris claim. Interviewees who had studied on the Motley course confirm that they were taught to cede their creative style to the text, but it is unclear how this was taught, and any subsequent effect on these individual's design practices. Therefore, further research should be concerned with examining whether there is a Motley 'school' aesthetic of poetic realism, and how this is shaped through teaching and learning.

2.2 Question Two: How Does Design/Scenography Education Position Designer/Scenographers in the Organisation of Performance Making?

The second research question is concerned with the organisation of

[17] Lacey, p. 241.
[18] Margaret Harris, *Interviewed by Cathy Courtney,* 11th August 1992.

performance making, and how the designer/scenographer is positioned in these processes. There are three findings that emerge from this question:

1. The Motley course conceives of designers as occupying a particular role, in a particular performance making context.
2. Conceptualisations of design/scenography in scholarly literature published since 2000 are expanding and expansive, and this impacts upon the perceived positionality of the designer/scenographer.
3. Contemporary design/scenography education conceives of the designer/scenographer as occupying different positions in different performance making contexts.

2.2.1 Designer/Scenographer Positionality on the Motley Course

In the introduction to this thesis, I provided a rationale for the conflation of the terms 'design' and 'scenography' but in chapters four and five I chose to use the terms 'theatre design' and 'theatre designer'. This choice was deliberate and arises from the relative stability of the agency and positionality of the designer present on the Motley course. This contrasts with conceptualisations of occupational role in the contemporary context. Defining the occupation of a designer/scenographer is problematic because it is concerned with the agency of the person or persons *doing* design/scenography. As Hann suggests, the adoption of the term 'scenography' has been used as an occupational argument for why designers 'should have creative and conceptual parity with directors, performers, choreographers, dramaturgs'. The argument belies the assumption that scenography is 'conceptually for designers'. However, Hann argues that contemporary

scenography is implicated within the work of all those involved in performance making,[19] a finding that emerges from the literature review in chapter two. Therefore, the conclusion of the Motley case study is that designers are positioned in a performance making hierarchy. This positionality is associated with a stable occupational role, that implies constrained authorial agency. I have contrasted this with the lack of stability in identity agency in contemporary contexts, and a turn to the authorial.

2.2.2 Expansive (and Expanding) Conceptualisations of Design/Scenography

The second finding that arises from the second research question is that terms and practices associated with design/scenography are expansive and expanding, as Hann suggests it is 'a practice that is always seeking, always implicated, within a transgression of borders, whether disciplinary, linguistic, geographic or practical'.[20] The proliferation of terms is due to the metascenographic turn in the design/scenography field arising from the move of design/scenography from the conservatoire to the academy. As I observe in chapter two, this transition has led to the growth of scholarly research, groups and publications in design/scenography. In chapter two, I illustrated the expansive nature of terms, influenced by Collins and Nisbet's observation that design/scenography is situated in an 'unsettled and vertiginous terrain' and, because of this, should be treated like 'a discursive field', comprised of 'distinct and yet overlapping practices'.[21] I have used the discursive

[19] Hann, p. 3.
[20] Hann, p. 2.
[21] Collins and Nisbet, pp. 2–3.

frame as a tactic to recognise the difficulties associated with ontological essences of 'scenography' or 'design'. I anticipate that the discursive frames I have defined will be of interest to scholars in the field because they may be used to articulate and extend different conceptualisations of design/scenography.

2.2.3 The Designer/Scenographer and Positionality in Performance Making in Contemporary Contexts

The third finding associated with the second research question is the positionality of designer/scenographer on current design/scenography courses in the UK. I do not claim that this was a representative sample of course types because, as I explained in chapter three, two Russell Group HEI's were approached for an interview, but I did not receive responses to the interview requests. Therefore, an examination of Russell Group institutions represents an absence in this study, that could be addressed through further research.

In the institutions that were included in this study, I identified different coexisting positions of designer/scenographers:

- In a hierarchy, subservient to text and director
- As a sole author/creator of immersive environments
- As co-collaborator of site-specific performance
- As sole/collaborative author/performer of street performance
- As director/author/performer in verbatim theatre
- As theatre-maker in devised performance
- As creative technical generalist for small-scale touring performance
- As authors of non-material, 'invisible' and virtual space

The small study of current courses shows that the hierarchical positionality identified in the Motley case study coexists with design/scenography that is performative, with designer/scenographers taking an active role in performing, writing and directing performance. There appear to be four factors that influence the positionality of the designer/scenographer in performance making:

- The extent to which design/scenography is faithful to a literary text
- How performance making is arranged, whether through hierarchy or parataxis
- Whether performance making is an individual or group activity
- The extent to which design/scenography is conceptualised as being *for* performance or *as* performance.

There were some methodological limitations associated with the study of current courses. The analysis in chapter six describes curricula and the aim was to *document* curriculum. Then, I have undertaken a thematic analysis across the narratives. The study could have considered course documentation as a way to examine curricula in more detail but, as I observed in the analysis in chapter five, many of those interviewed commented upon what I have called the Baudrillardian hyperreality of 'official' course documentation that bears little relation to what is taught 'when the door's shut'. A discourse analysis of course documentation might offer a further avenue of inquiry to examine this disconnection in more depth.

The second methodological issue I experienced was that the biographical element of the individual photo-interviews tended to dominate the narrative, at the

expense of curricula and pedagogy. One participant in particular was engaging in the interview as if it was an 'oral history' interview, providing a linear account of their earliest memories, until the point that they started working as the course leader. I experienced a tension here, similar to that described by Leavy *et al.*:

> Narrative inquiry is confronted by the troubling fact that what a story means to an analyst may be quite different from what a story means to the storyteller. Often, the storyteller wants a listener/analyst/ researcher to "get into" his or her story, whereas a story analyst, especially a researcher, may be centrally interested in what he or she can "get out" or "take away" from a story.[22]

After the interview, I became aware that the interviewee had previously been interviewed by an oral history researcher. I can only speculate about whether he might have assumed that this was the purpose of our interview and wished to engage me in his story. However, we both engaged in the interview with different expectations and I felt confounded by the tensions between our expectations. It is possible that these were exacerbated because he had not provided a photograph for us to look at together. There are some strategies I would adopt if I was using this method again. I would develop a pre-interview relationship with the interviewee, by asking them to share their reflections on the image in advance of the interview giving me the opportunity to examine the image in the context of pedagogy and curriculum, prior to the interview. Therefore, the methodological issue of participant expectations of the form of interview, given their disciplinary position and previous experiences of interviews, is an intriguing one which could be usefully explored through further research.

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[22] Patricia Leavy, Arthur Bochner, and Nicholas A. Riggs, 'Practicing Narrative Inquiry', *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2014, 195–222 (p. 205).

2.3 Question Three: How does Design/Scenography Education Express Designer/Scenographer Agency?

The third research question is concerned with how education expresses designer/scenographer agency. There are three kinds of agency that this study examines. Identity agency is defined as 'role enactment'[23] and I use this term to refer to occupational role. Authorial agency is the extent to which designer/scenographers participate in the authorship of a production.[24] 'Professional agency' describes the extent to which individuals participate in 'professional subjects and/or communities of influence'.[25] I have shown that the expression and enactment of these three dimensions of agency are both enabled and constrained in different performance making contexts. There are two findings that emerge from this research question:

1. Identity agency, and professional agency are conceived of as largely fixed and stable on the Motley course.
2. The expansion of occupational territories in some contemporary forms of performance making create the potential to enable authorial agency amongst performance-makers.

2.3.1 The Expression of Agency: The Motley Theatre Design Course

The Motley case study shows that an ensemble organised around the play text, in a hierarchical arrangement, reinforces identity agency of

[23] Hitlin and Elder, p. 175.
[24] Isackes, 'Rethinking The Pedagogy Of Performance Collaboration: Two Case Studies That Assert Authorial Agency In Scenographic Education', p. 2.
[25] Eteläpelto and others, p. 61.

designer/scenographers leading to stable occupational roles. Authorial agency is suppressed, mediated through the text, director, and the performing body. I have already remarked upon the role of relational and place-based dimensions of pedagogy and how they contribute towards strong social and familial relationships between students and staff, in response to the first research question. These dimensions of pedagogy appear to enable professional agency.

2.3.2 The Expression of Agency: Small Study of Courses of Design/Scenography

In the study of current design courses in chapter six, I observed that different approaches to performance making coexist and the occupational territory occupied by designer/scenographers is expansive and expanding. On some of the courses described in this study, there are opportunities for learners to exercise authorial agency; by writing, directing, performing and devising own work. However, the potential for authorial agency is confounded by neoliberal policies that have moved higher education away from a notion of public good, towards consumer good. The introduction of tuition fees, and the associated shortfall in living costs under the student loans scheme, contributes towards less diverse student cohorts; interviewees cited student concerns about future career opportunities and earning potential, the financial requirements of living in a particular geographic area and the imposition of 'no-work' rules on some courses, either for the course's duration, or at key times of the academic year. There also appears to be a dissonance between technicist models of teaching and learning that are associated with neoliberal higher education policies, and signature pedagogies associated with the creative and

performing arts that arise from social constructivist models of learning. I will address this particular finding in more detail at the end of this conclusion. These factors contribute to a destabilisation of identity agency, with authorial agency distributed through networks. Professional agency is supplanted by proxy agency, 'where multiple participants negotiate as they interact with and co-operate or struggle with each other'.[26] In chapter six I referred to Irwin's notion of 'intra-active agency', where agency is exercised through relationships with others. This notion implies fluidity in occupational territories but also directly challenges whether it is necessary to carve out occupational territories at all. However, the displacement of agency from individuals to networks may also be a feature of precarity that is characterised by short-term shallow relations.[27] The application of concepts of agency has provided a way to articulate how designer/scenographers are perceived to act, and how they are positioned, in processes of performance making. The interdisciplinary approach that I have taken to questions of positionality and agency form the basis of my next claim for an original contribution to knowledge.

The benefits of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the topic of this thesis offers a different perspective on how the designer/scenographer is situated in performance making. In chapter three, I referred to Walker and Thomson's warnings about 'the eclecticism of interdisciplinarity',[28] but this tactic enables examination of why some occupational labels associated with design/scenography might be problematic. I demonstrated in chapter two that design/scenography scholars are aware of the impact of hierarchy on role in performance making but

[26] King, p. 259.
[27] Wittel, p. 51.
[28] Walker and Thomson, p. 27.

have not fully explored this in the context of designer/scenographer agency. By examining tightly defined notions of agency, I have revealed existing paradigms about design/scenography, the arrangement of performance making and the perceived role of the designer/scenographer within those structures. Furthermore, the application of concepts of agency in this context, shows that the agency literature largely conceptualises agency as an individual attribute, rather than as a social or networked attribute. In this way, I not only take from other disciplines, but also potentially offer something in return. I anticipate that the examination of occupational identity, via the lens of agency, is of interest to scholars interested in the emergence and development of other occupational identities in performance, as well as social theorists interested in the phenomena of agency and structure, in occupational contexts.

2.4 Question Four: Is There a Relationship Between Positionality […] and the Expression and Enactment of Agency?

The conclusion to this research question is reflected in the title of this thesis, 'Illustrator, Collaborator, Auteur' because these terms show that there has been a turn towards the authorial in the occupational identities of designer/scenographers. In the Motley case study, I showed how the occupational identities of designer/scenographers have changed through processes of professionalisation, from illustrators or decorators, to creative collaborators and artist-technicians. In the study of current design/scenography courses, I show that a reconceptualisation of designer/scenographers has occurred, as well as a dissolution of individual identities, to encompass diverse identities as generative artists, creating and

authoring design/scenography as performance, alongside the notion of designer/scenographers as reactive artists. Although 'authorial' implies a singular entity, I use the expression in the awareness that this may become a social and networked attribute, rather than the property of a particular occupational role. Therefore, the conclusions of this study support Irwin's observation that there is:

> [A]n amplification in the role of the scenographer from that of adjunct to a director, primarily concerned with filling and decorating the stage, to being an equal contributor in a collaborative artistic vision, to conceiving and realizing alternative genres of performance that engage with social issues in non - conventional spaces.[29]

The opportunity for designer/scenographers to author and generate performance appears to liberate them from a hierarchical arrangement where they have less power and agency than others who occupy a higher position in the hierarchy. Radosavljević invokes Roesner's concept of 'Composed Theatre', to describe 'creation processes that bring the musical notion of composing to the theatrical aspects of performing and staging'[30], describing the emergent occupational identities of those engaged in performance making as 'multi-professionals'.[31]

3. Neoliberalism, Pedagogy and Design/Scenography Education

I will now turn to another finding that emerges from the contrast between the Motley case study and the study of contemporary courses of design/scenography. I had not intended to compare the two parts of the study because they exist in a

[29] Irwin, p. 112.
[30] David Rebstock and David Roesner, *Composed Theatre* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), p. 11.
[31] Radosavljević, p. 21.

different time and context. However, the comparison between the studies illuminates a significant finding of the study which is the impact of technicist approaches on teaching and learning in contemporary design/scenography education.

3.1 Folk Pedagogy

In chapter five I argued that folk pedagogy was present in the approach to teaching and learning on the Motley Course. In chapter four I showed that Harris' approach was informed by her experiences of working alongside Saint-Denis at the London Theatre Studio, and subsequent experiences of professional practice. Motley teachers gained their teaching skills through an 'apprenticeship of observation',[32] rather than through formal training. Motley alumni had a strong sense of the lineage and inheritance being passed onto them, both as designers and teacher/practitioners. I had not expected to find this continuing legacy of the Motley approach in the second study of course leaders. It is clear through my subsequent discussions with convenors of the Motley alumni network, that Motley alumni became teachers in the UK and around the world. Therefore, an area for further research might consider how the Motley lineage has influenced design/scenography education in national and international contexts.

The folk pedagogy of the Motley course constitutes the imagined identities of students as 'emergent professionals'.[33] However, this axiological dimension of folk pedagogy seems diametrically opposed to the phenomenon I document in the

[32] Shulman, p. 57.
[33] Mark Evans.

contemporary context, of professional designer/scenographers retreating into the academy in search of secure work as professional work becomes more precarious. Clarke, Howard[34] and Isackes[35] have commented upon this phenomenon and their observations are supported by the career biographies of the interviewees in this study. The onset of precarious conditions in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to interviewees opting for a stable and secure income and prospects in teaching, at a time when they had young children. Conversely, the authorial turn in design/scenography may also be shaped by precarious working conditions. In chapter two, I noted Baugh's argument that the emergence of a multi-skilled, entrepreneurial theatre professional, or a 'jack of all trades',[36] emerged at the same time as stable professional careers in design/scenography, began to disappear.

This may have implications for the future of the design/scenography discipline, and the continuance of inherited design traditions. Pavelka describes a point of departure in design/scenography education, between the philosophy and model of education embodied at Motley, and the future of design/scenography education:

> The days of theatre-design [sic] courses in higher education being run by top-flight designers are over. It's unlikely that we'll see the likes of […] Alison Chitty leading a programme that has its foundations set firmly on professional experience handing on a legacy from designer to designer, generation to generation […] Formal design education is now largely in the grip of university traditions and, as such, is bound by increasingly structured academic regulation and an emphasis on following a practice to think through its activities rather than think of them […] These tangible and influential timelines are being consigned to history books that are now emerging from new scholarly interest in how theatre design has evolved in recent decades.[37]

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[34] Pamela Howard *Interviewed by Kate Harris*, 9 November 2005.
[35] Isackes, 'The Design Dilemma'.
[36] Baugh, 'English Scenography, Education and the Public Purse', p. 129.
[37] Pavelka, *So You Want to Be a Theatre Designer?*, p. 333.

I include this quote here, not to imply any kind of valorisation of an ideal model of design education like the Motley course, but to underscore how the particular dimension of folk pedagogy, associated with an inherited tradition, may eventually be supplanted by a different kind of teacher/practitioner. However, defining what would constitute the new teacher/practitioner is beyond the scope of this study and so a further area of research inquiry could consider the career biographies, professional, and occupational identities of teachers of design/scenography in higher education and how these are changing.

3.2 Relational and Embodied Pedagogy

In chapter five, I showed that the Motley course featured embodied pedagogies, through teacher's physical demonstration of techniques, and through their physical presence in the design studio. There was another dimension to embodiment that emerged through the object elicitation exercise, that concerns relational dimensions of learning. An enduring memory that remains for me is the object chosen by one of the Motley alumni. Linda's choice of the necklace that Harris touched when she was in hospital, at the end of her life. The object carried an embodied sense of Harris, and Linda was anxious that everyone should touch and feel the weight of the necklace, as if by doing so, we could somehow experience an embodied connection with Harris. The relational dimension of the course, that included the use of group numbers and the social space of the studio, also served the purpose of easing student transition to a professional network and to maintain the wider professional network of directors and designers that was nurtured by Harris. It was remarkable that although the focus group participants were not close

friends, they knew of each other through the networks established by Harris. These affiliations contributed towards an exceptionally warm, friendly and trusting atmosphere during the focus group.

The embodied and relational pedagogies on the Motley course contrast with the findings in chapter six, where course leaders describe the dissonance between quality processes that seek to document and measure teaching and learning that I have argued arise from the introduction of market-relations in higher education, and the impact of this on relations with students. Vaughan *et al.* argue that technicist approaches to education that predetermine learning outcomes are incongruent with creative processes that are ambiguous.[38] In chapter two, I noted Gergen's concerns with how technicist assessment changes the relation of teacher to student, from friend and collaborator, to judge.[39] The reconfiguration of student-as-consumer introduces *contractual relations* into the relations between teachers and students. Interviewees talked about the negative impact of this upon learners taking risks, and creativity, such as Meghan's comment that 'contracts' with students 'kill creativity'. Furthermore, there were implied adversarial relations, and mistrust between teachers and learners, as in Rowena's example of the 'sneaky mark sheets'.

3.3 Place-Based Pedagogy

In chapter five, I described the importance of place-based pedagogy on the Motley course. The studio was proximal to professional practice, with directors 'popping' in to visit the Motleys or to see student work. Interviewees expressed

[38] Vaughan and others, p. 125.
[39] Kenneth J Gergen, p. 212.

strong senses of belonging and safety in the studio environment, despite the sometimes cold and austere conditions that they worked in. The course was often situated in a working theatre. This meant that students were engaging with work-based learning without experiencing the separation of the academy from the profession and workplace.

However, the place of the studio in current design/scenography education is impacted in two ways. Firstly studio space is being reduced and compromised, despite the significant capital investment that universities are making in campus redevelopment. In chapter six, I argued that the introduction of market relations into higher education has resulted in the marketisation of higher education, with HEI's primarily investing in architecture as marketing, whilst perhaps not fully attending to architecture for teaching and learning. A particular example of this was the contrast between the imposing entrance at one HEI, that includes a shopping and cafe area, and the diminutive and dark studio space that was shared by different year cohorts. The second aspect of the threat to relational and embodied pedagogy, associated with the place of the studio, is that the TEF requires HEIs to account for teacher contact time with learners. For example, one of the interviews began with this issue, as interviewees returned from a meeting where they were informed that they were required to identify the 'taught' time in the studio. A technicist notion of teaching conceives of teaching as transmission, akin to Freire's 'Banking Method' of education.[40] However, this notion is fundamentally at odds with constructivist models of embodied and relational pedagogy and the social and experiential

[40] Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 108..

learning that is associated with the studio environment.

3.4 Signature Pedagogies and Constructivism

The signature pedagogies that were present on the Motley course, appear to be constrained on current courses of design/scenography. Prentki and Stinson argue that the performing arts are innately constructivist because drama is usually a collective activity, with relations conceived in terms of dialogue and reciprocity, rather than a 'transactional process of buying and selling'.[41] Similarly, Rasmussen argues that constructivist approaches to education are not just desirable but essential for an aesthetic of performance that is concerned with experiencing.[42] This perspective is relevant because, as I argued in chapter two, as design/scenography expands, it is concerned with experiential modes of encounter. Therefore, there is a dissonance between the innate constructivism associated with the arts that Dewey describes,[43] and technicist models of teaching and learning in the contemporary education context. As one interviewee described it; between what is written in course documentation and what is taught 'when the door is shut'. I will turn now to the hidden aspects of pedagogy and curriculum that have been identified through this study that warrant further research.

3.5 Compromised Pedagogy

Whilst signature pedagogies privilege some forms of knowing and being, they

[41] Prentki and Stinson, p. 8.
[42] Rasmussen, p. 533.
[43] Dewey, p. 10.

also neglect others. Shulman's notion of 'compromised pedagogy'[44] provides a useful frame to articulate tacit dimensions of pedagogy. For example, as I have shown, folk pedagogy's axiological dimensions assume that students will be working in a profession that may no longer exist in the way that design/scenography teachers once experienced, that should prompt design/scenography educators to ask, 'What part of the training from our old bag of tricks is still valid, and what part should be deracinated?'.[45] It seems that the challenge that faces design/scenography educators now is to identify strategies to manage technicist models of education that impede learning, and to challenge neoliberal discourses of precarity. For example, there may be opportunities to engage learners in shaping and defining what the new profession might comprise of, in the spirit of dialogue and mutual learning between learners and teachers. Therefore, these suggestions indicate that further research is required to examine the impact of precarity on professional design/scenographers, and the ways that new forms of 'professionalism' might be constructed in response to this.

Similarly, Margolis' concept of the 'hidden curriculum' reveals the ways in which precarity may be 'hidden in plain sight',[46] in some current courses of design/scenography. For example, I noted earlier in this thesis that some of the course leaders interviewed for this study treat precarity as a structural given, using the curriculum to equip students with the skills to navigate and accommodate precarity, rather than challenge or resist it. Learner experiences of the effects of precarity, such as responses to group assessment, mental health issues, participation

[44] Shulman, p. 58.
[45] Salzer, p. 154.
[46] Margolis, p. 2.

inequalities, and capital investment and spaces for learning, are beyond the scope of this study and could be examined through further research. However, on the basis of the findings that emerge from this study, there may be potential to create space within the curriculum to engage students with the issues impacting their lives, creative practice and future work opportunities. For example, Allen *et al*.[47] propose the inclusion of modules in the curriculum that directly address issues of inequality in the arts. Furthermore, there is potential for engaging learners in the political dimensions of arts policy making concerned with policy making and lobbying. There may be HEIs that are already engaging learners explicitly with these issues, and so further research would be necessary here to identify existing models of good practice.

4. Closing Commentary

The reflection upon the contrast between the Motley case study and the study of current design courses, recalls Miller's 'autobiography of the [research] question',[48] discussed in chapter three. Miller uses this phrase to describe how the positionality and experiences of the researcher contribute to the choice of research topic and the formulation of research questions. The unique position I occupy in this study has contributed to a distinctive methodological approach and noteworthy findings about the impact of neoliberal policy on pedagogy. Therefore, in conclusion, I would reconfigure Miller's autobiography of the question as 'the autobiography of the answer'. My day to day experiences of teaching and learning

[47] Allen and others, p. 449.
[48] Jane Miller, p. 22.

are that it is a relational, human, and shared process. However, like those who were interviewed for this study, I am also subject to neoliberal higher education policy, and the concomitant technicist models of learning. I also feel constrained, frustrated and confounded in my ability to support and engage learners in their learning. The signature pedagogies that emerge from the Motley course may hold some potential for resisting and challenging technicist models. As Shreeve argues, signature pedagogies from the arts have the potential to better prepare *all* learners for 'a future of chronic uncertainty',[49] because relational and social pedagogies provide stability when undertaking ambiguous and complex tasks. Shields *et al.* have termed this 'artful pedagogy'; or ways to 'cultivate encounters with modes of thinking/being/becoming that are both prevalent in and unique to the arts'.[50] Therefore, further research should consider how design/scenography educators may be creating, and may have the potential to create, spaces in their day to day practices to challenge and resist technicist models of education. As Prentki and Stinson argue:

> Like a fish in a bowl of polluted water, we are being killed by it but cannot risk throwing it all out until there is a clean supply to replace it. The system is also us and therefore the change must be a part of ourselves. We cannot wait passively for the revolution; rather we must be the revolution through our professional practice and our personal relations. [51]

The reconstruction of the Motley Theatre Design Course offers a valuable and unique perspective on what might be retained, strengthened and actively

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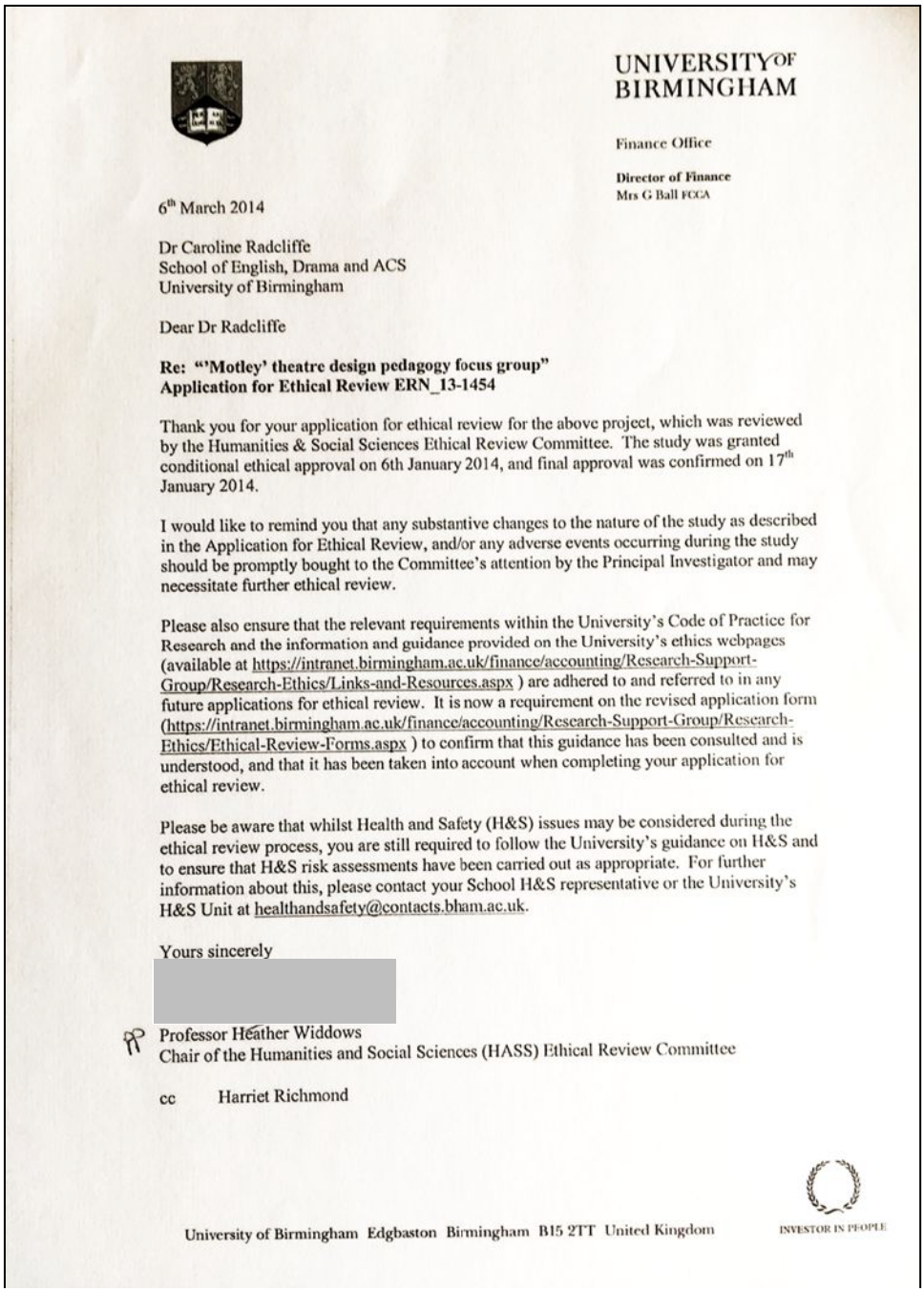
[49] Shreeve, p. 116.
[50] Sara Scott Shields, Kelly W. Guyotte, and Nicole Weedo, 'Artful Pedagogy: (En)Visioning the Unfinished Whole', *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 13.1 (2016), 44–66 (p. 45).
[51] Prentki and Stinson, p. 9.

accommodated in current courses of design/scenography, and those dimensions that are no longer fit for purpose. Furthermore, ‘artful pedagogy’ may represent a site of resistance to market relations in higher education, by transferring these practices and philosophies beyond the creative and performing arts disciplines.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Ethical Approval from the University of Birmingham



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Finance Office

Director of Finance
Mrs G Ball FCCA

6th March 2014

Dr Caroline Radcliffe
School of English, Drama and ACS
University of Birmingham

Dear Dr Radcliffe

Re: "'Motley' theatre design pedagogy focus group"
Application for Ethical Review ERN_13-1454

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee. The study was granted conditional ethical approval on 6th January 2014, and final approval was confirmed on 17th January 2014.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly bought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Professor Heather Widdows
Chair of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Ethical Review Committee

cc Harriet Richmond

University of Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT United Kingdom

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Finance Office

Director of Finance
Mrs G Ball OBE FCCA

13th May 2014

Dear Dr Radcliffe

Re: "Stage designer: illustrator, collaborator or auteur? Pedagogy, professional identity and the role of the visual in theatre performance"
Application for Ethical Review ERN_14-0506

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I can confirm the conditions of approval for the study have now been met and this study now has full ethical approval.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly bought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

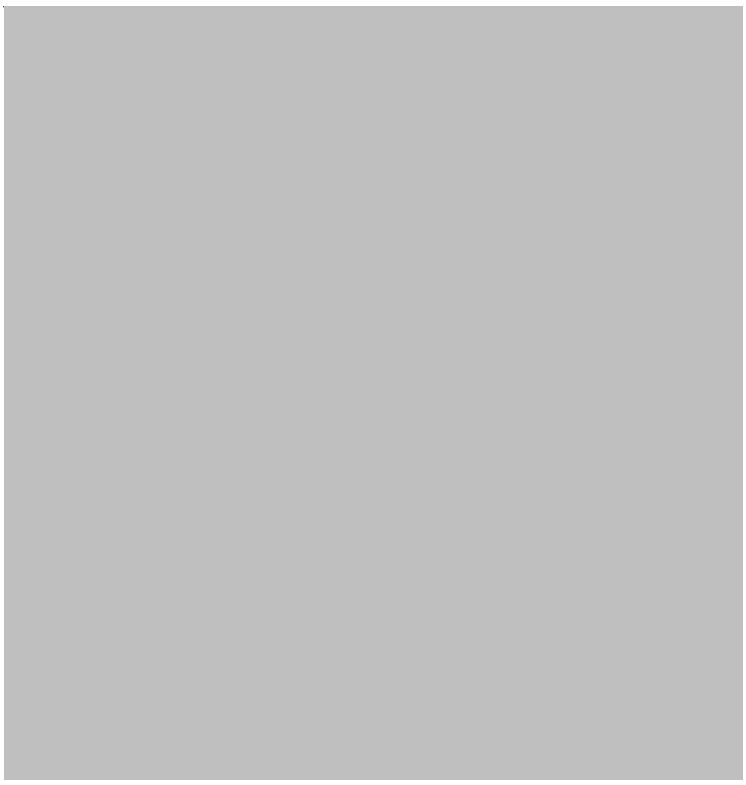
Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

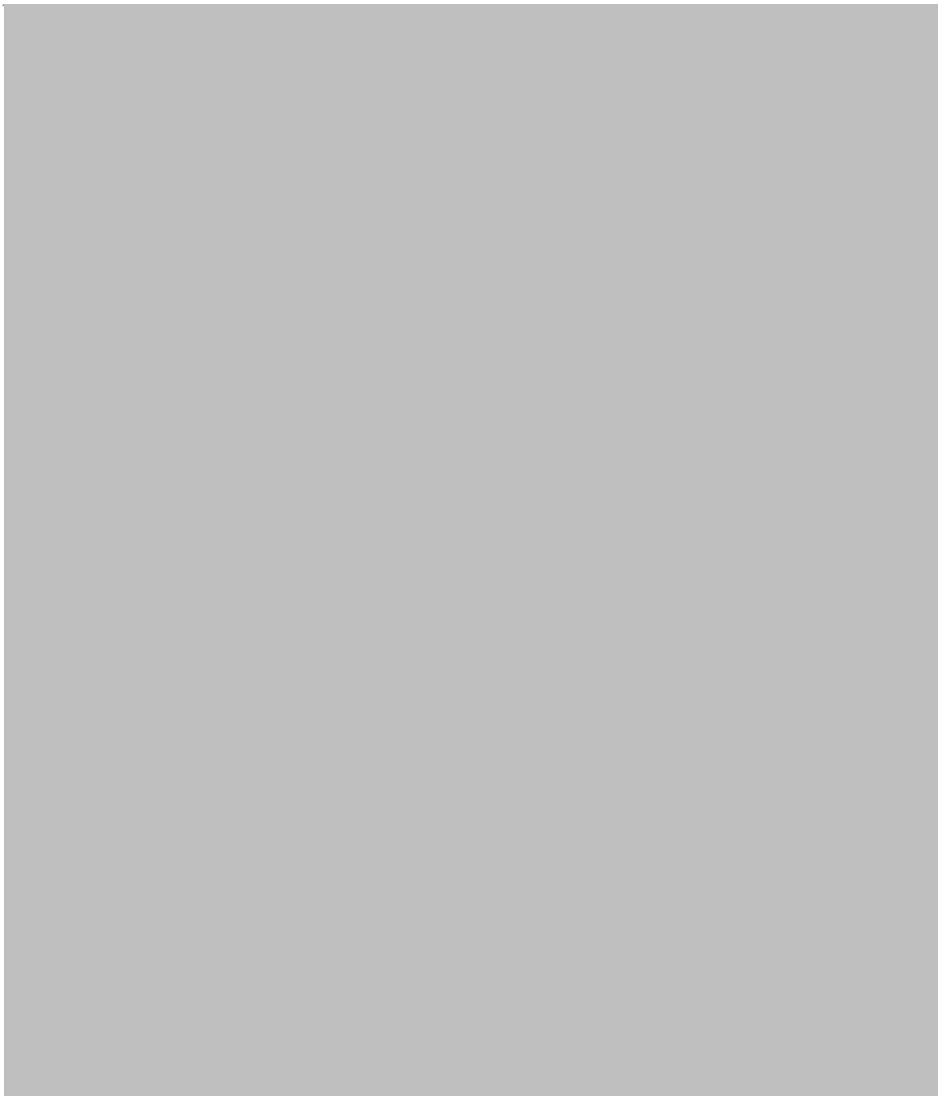
Yours sincerely

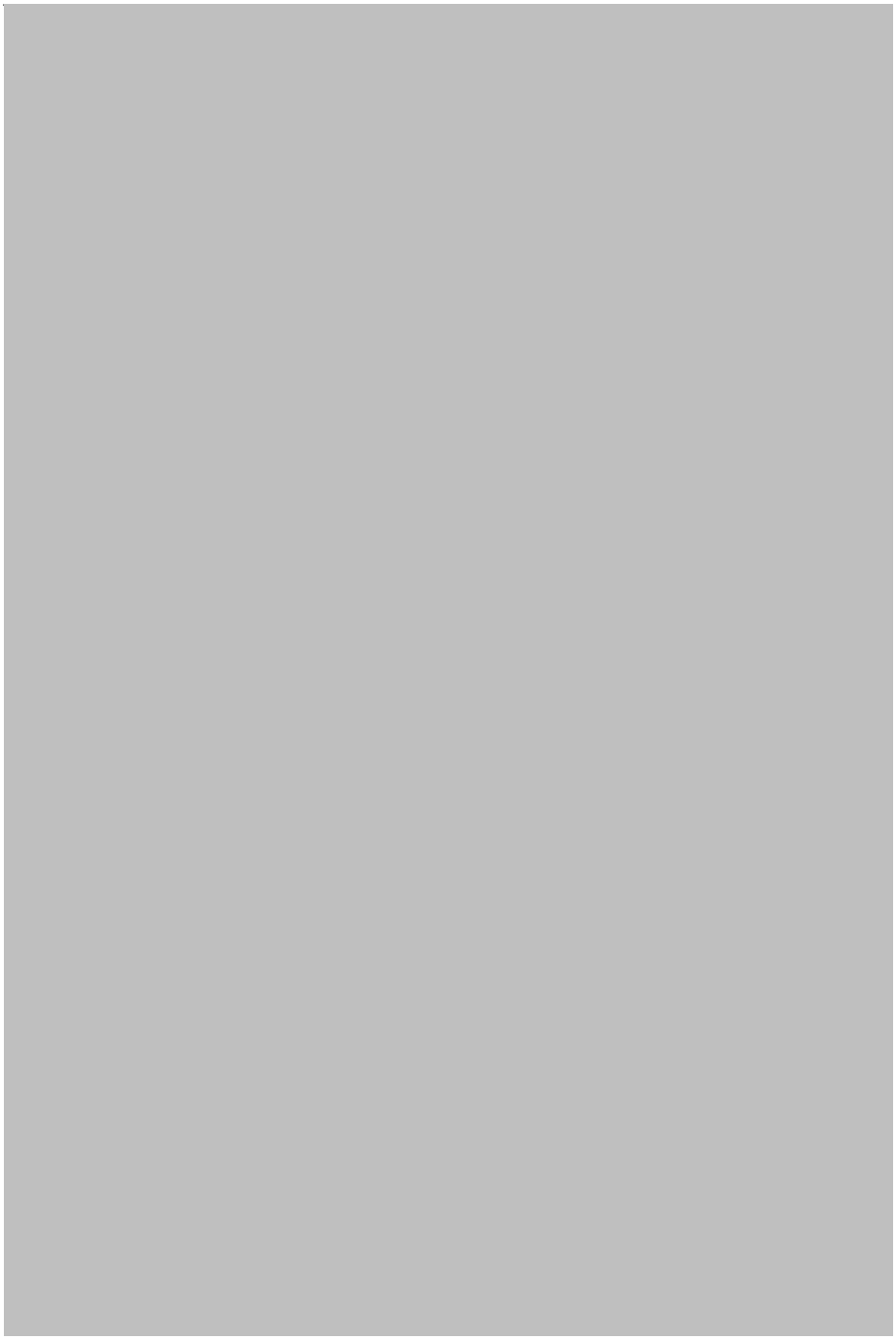
Dr Kataryna Wolczuk
Co-Chair
Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

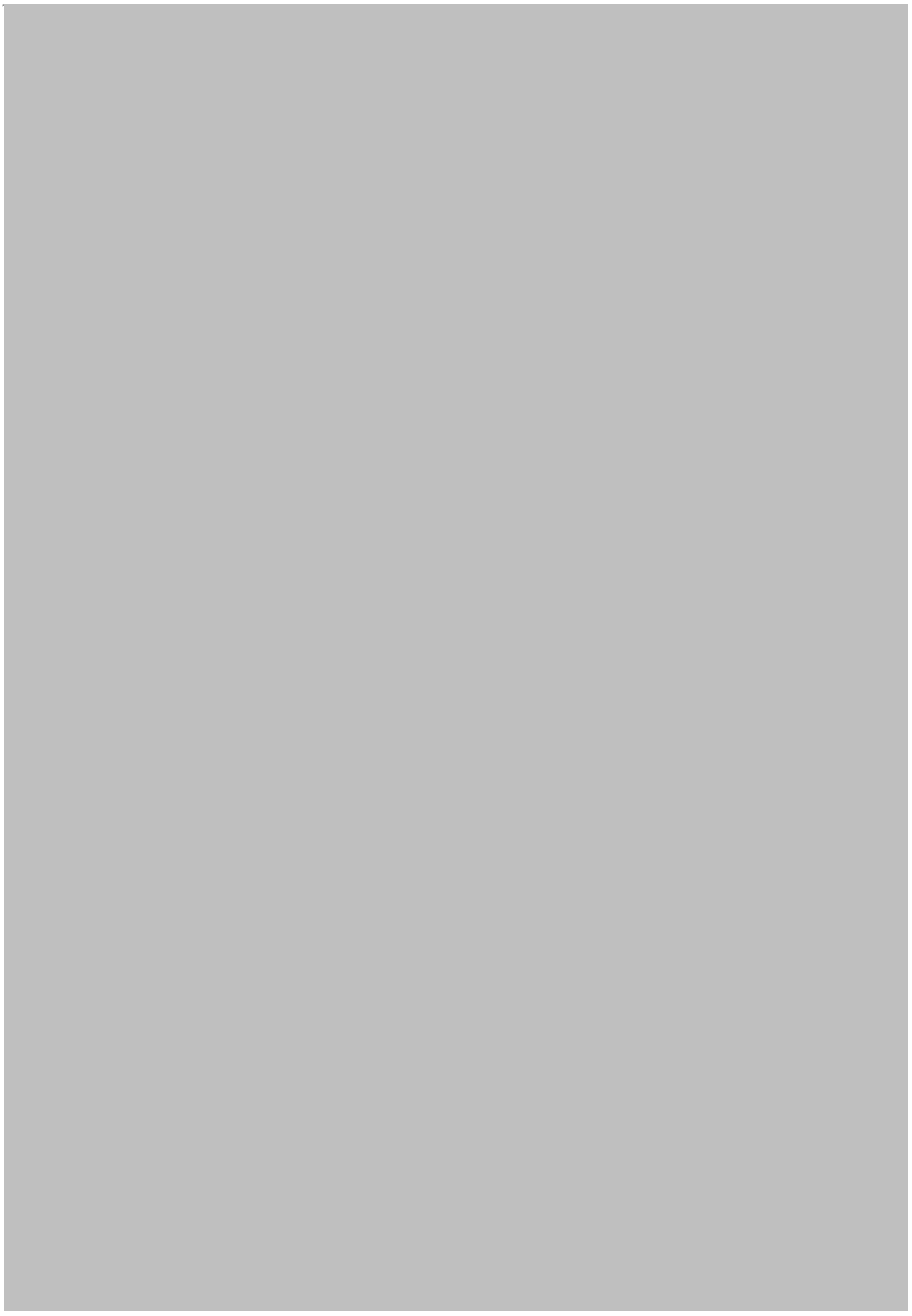
Cc Harriett Richmond

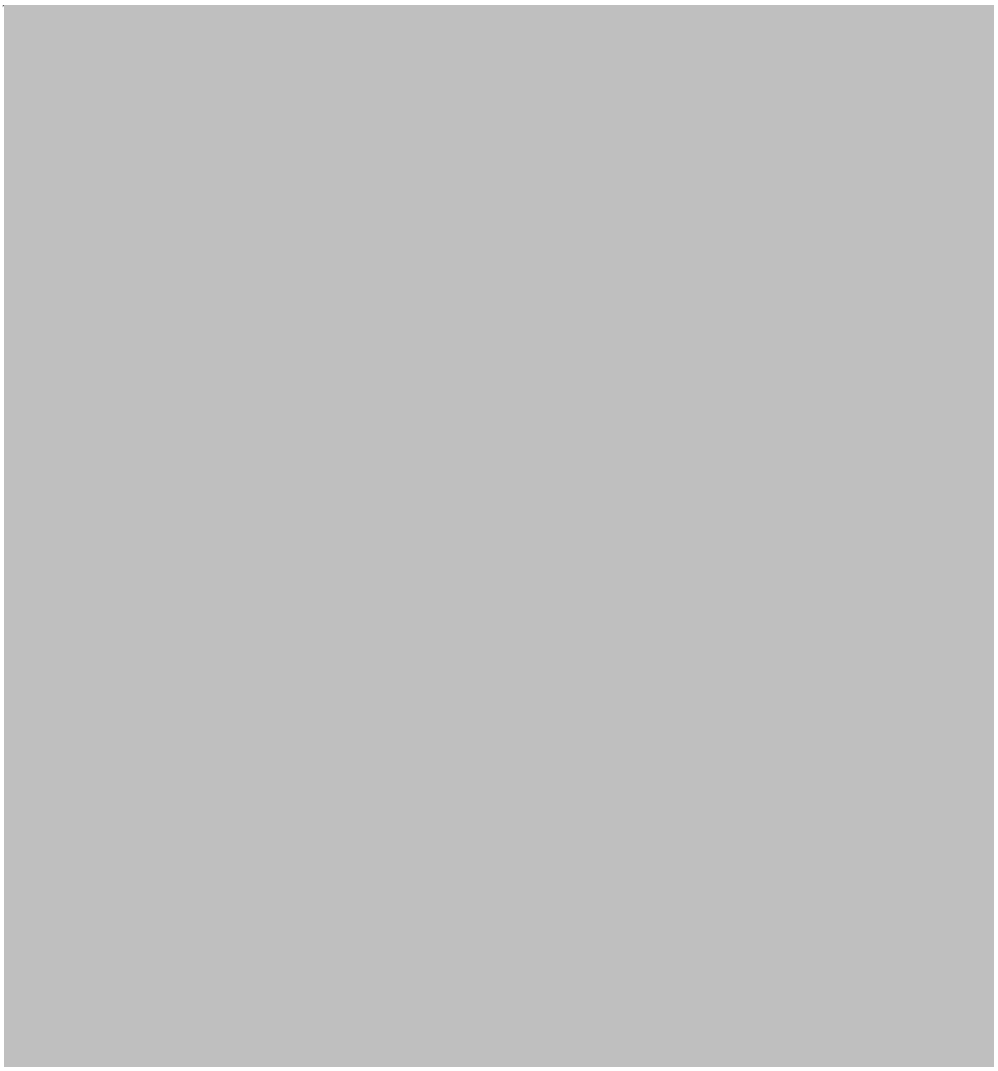
Appendix II: Handwritten Responses to the Object Elicitation Exercise

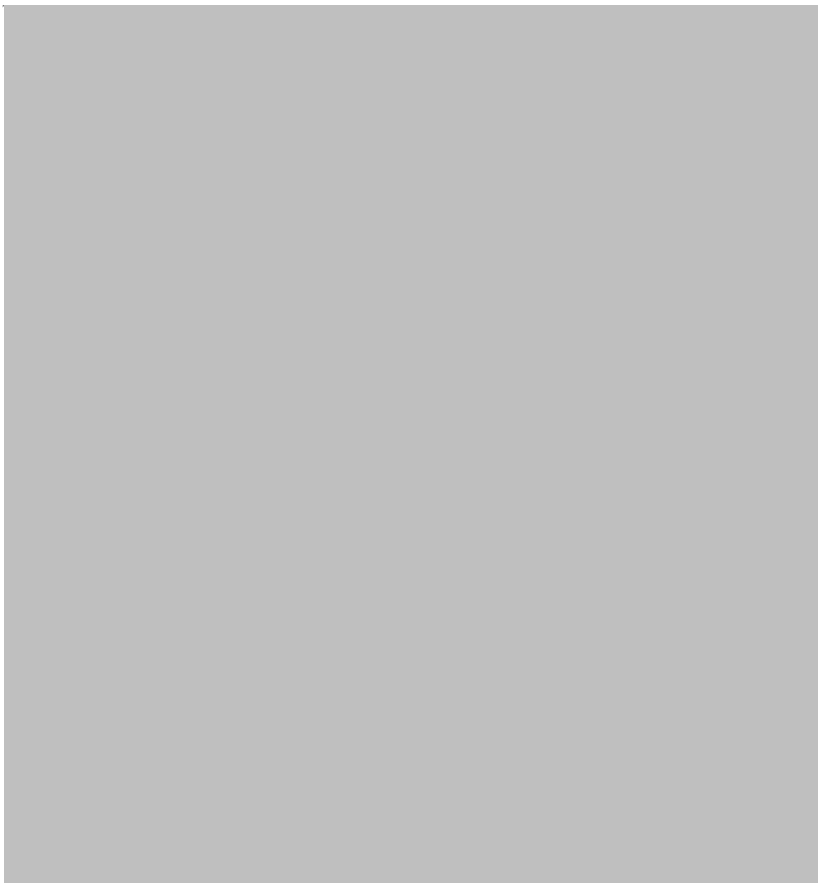


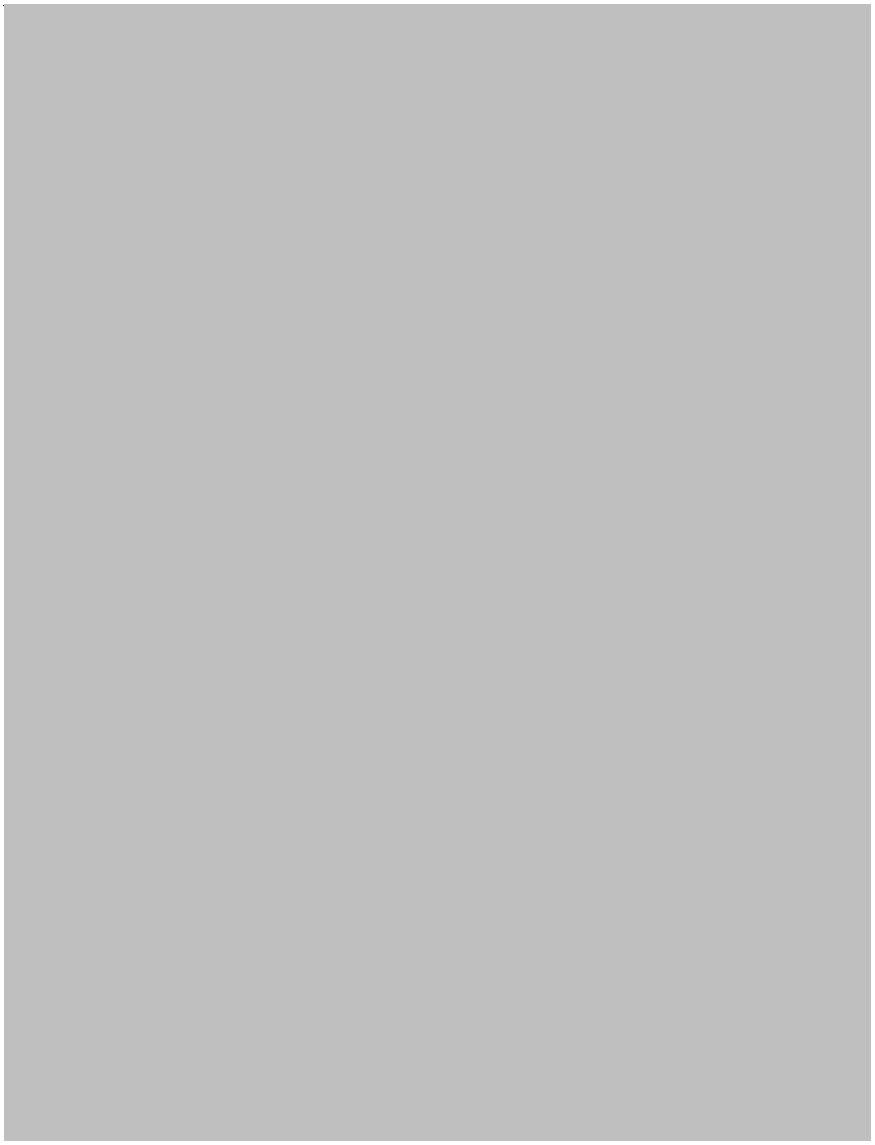


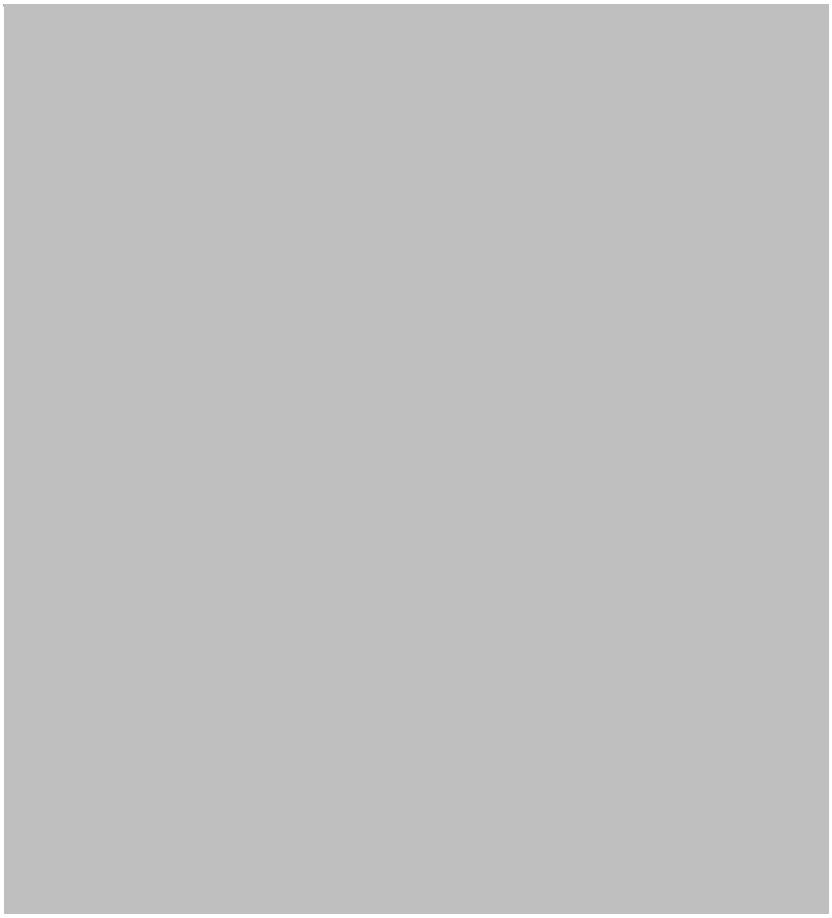


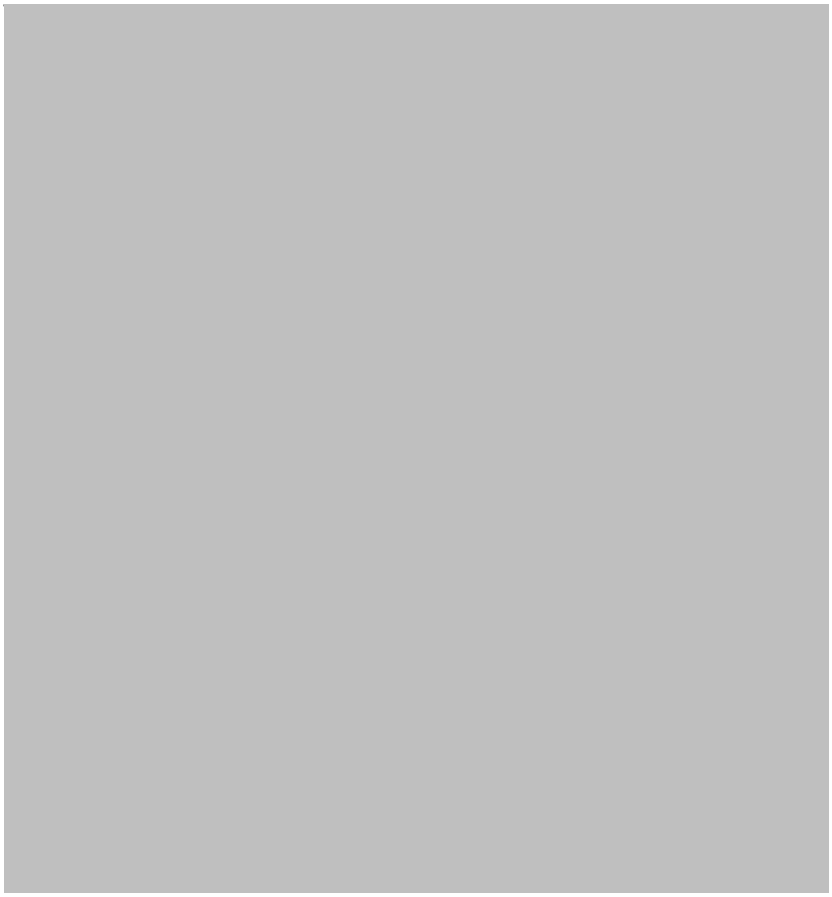


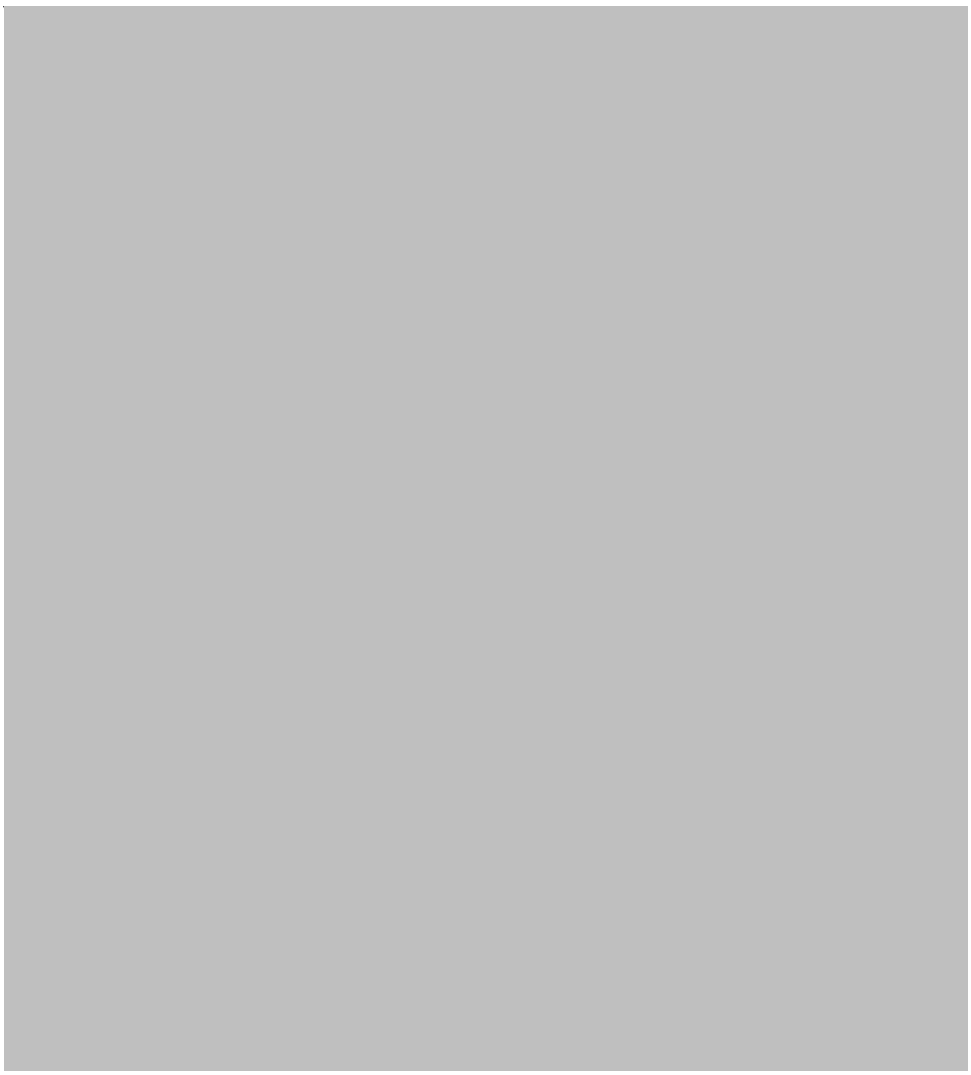


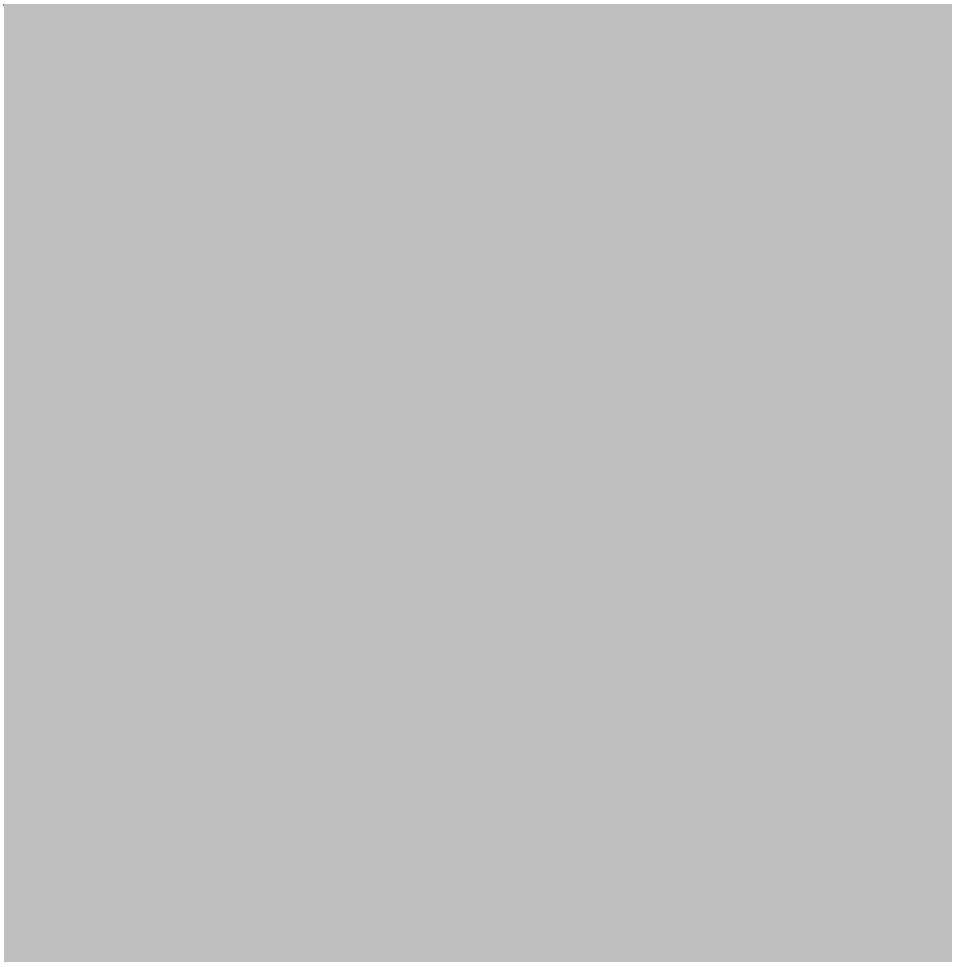


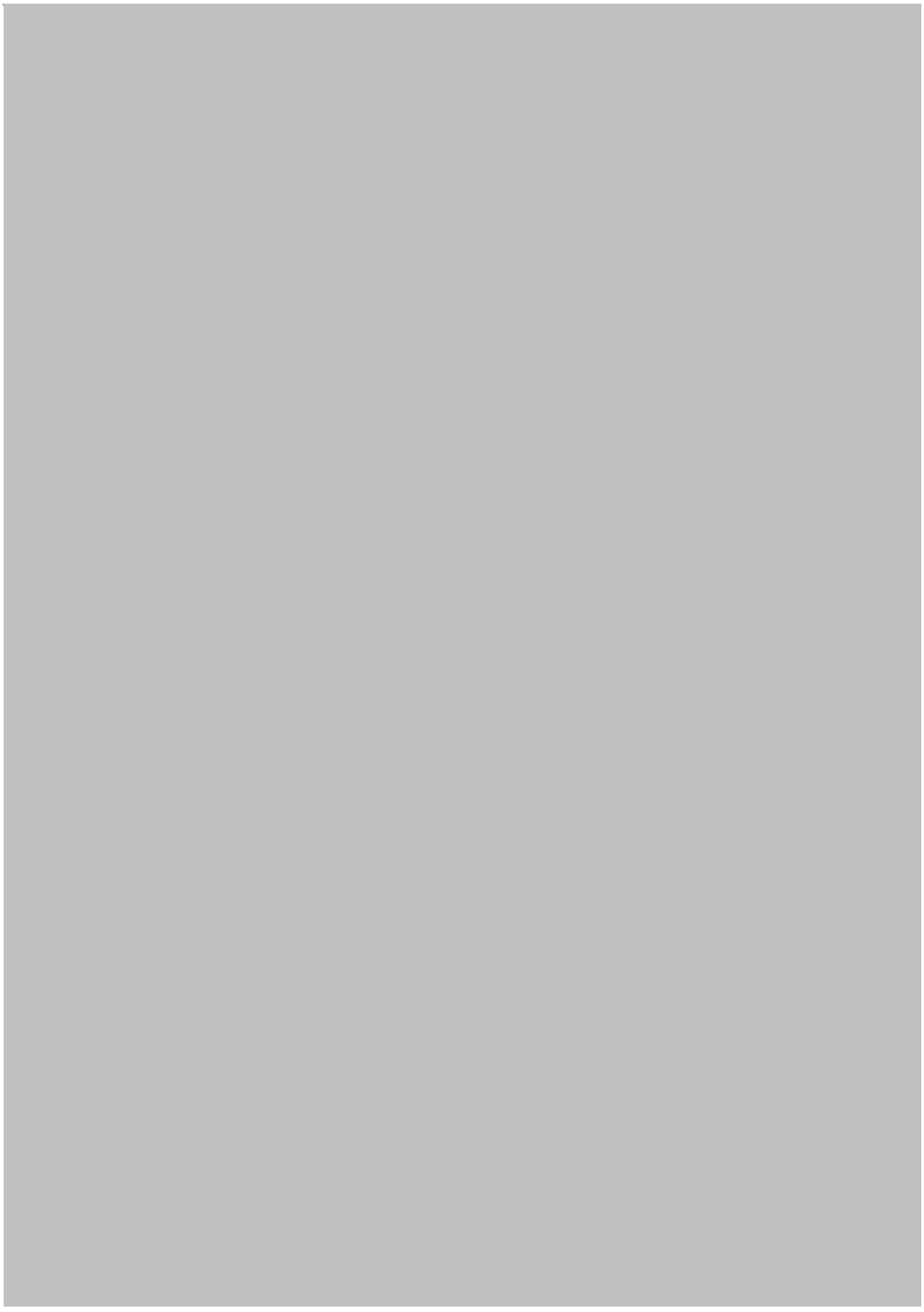


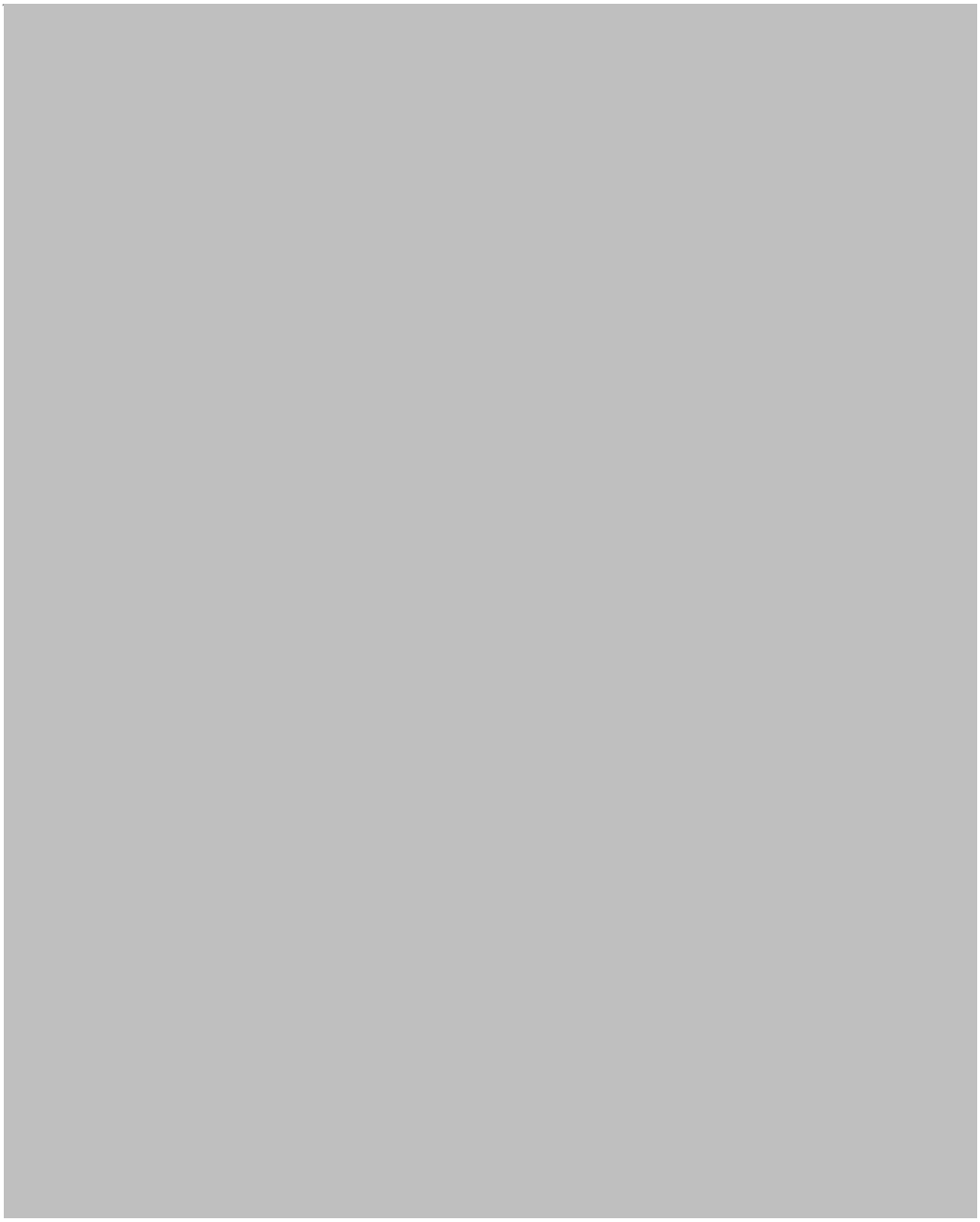


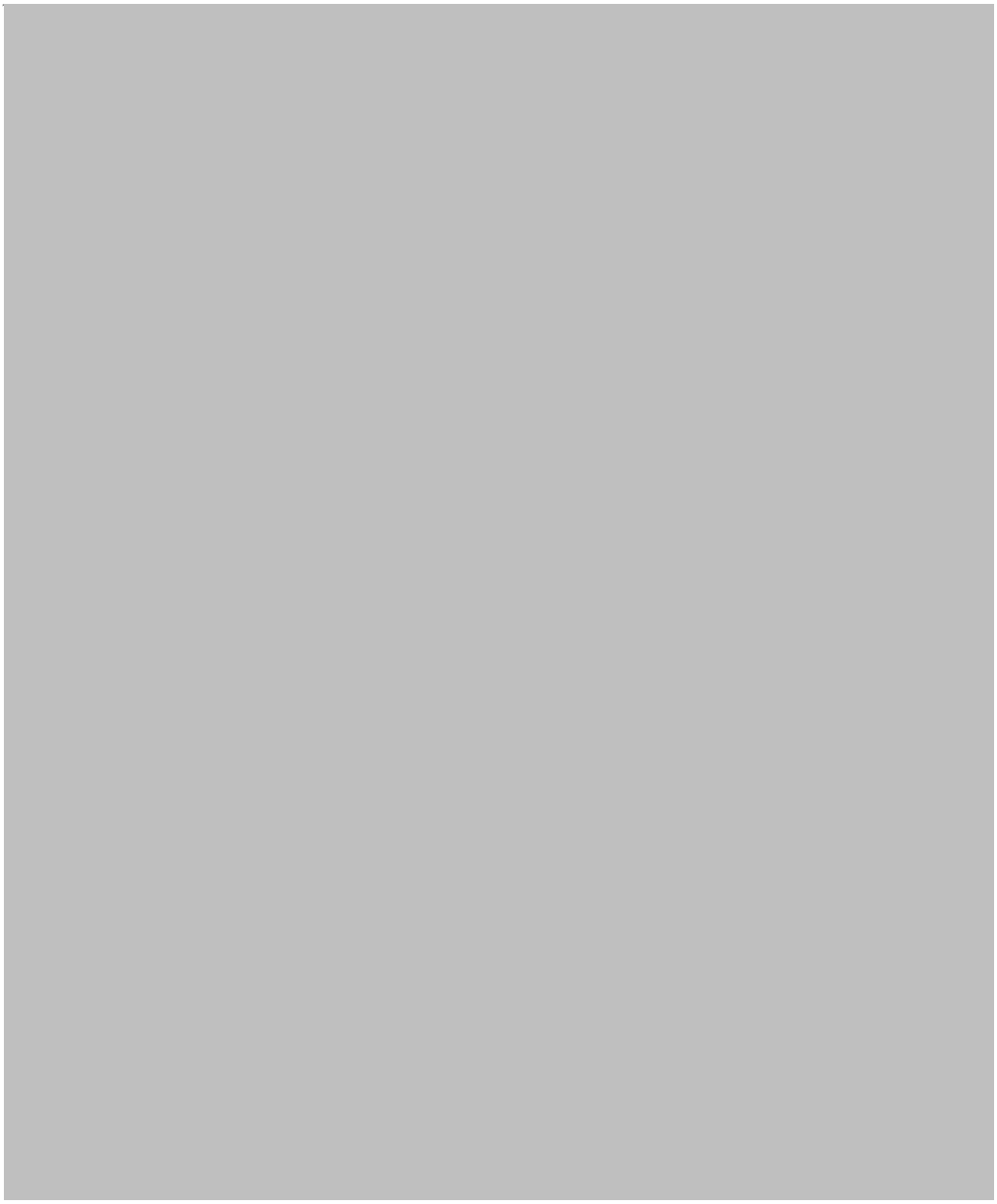


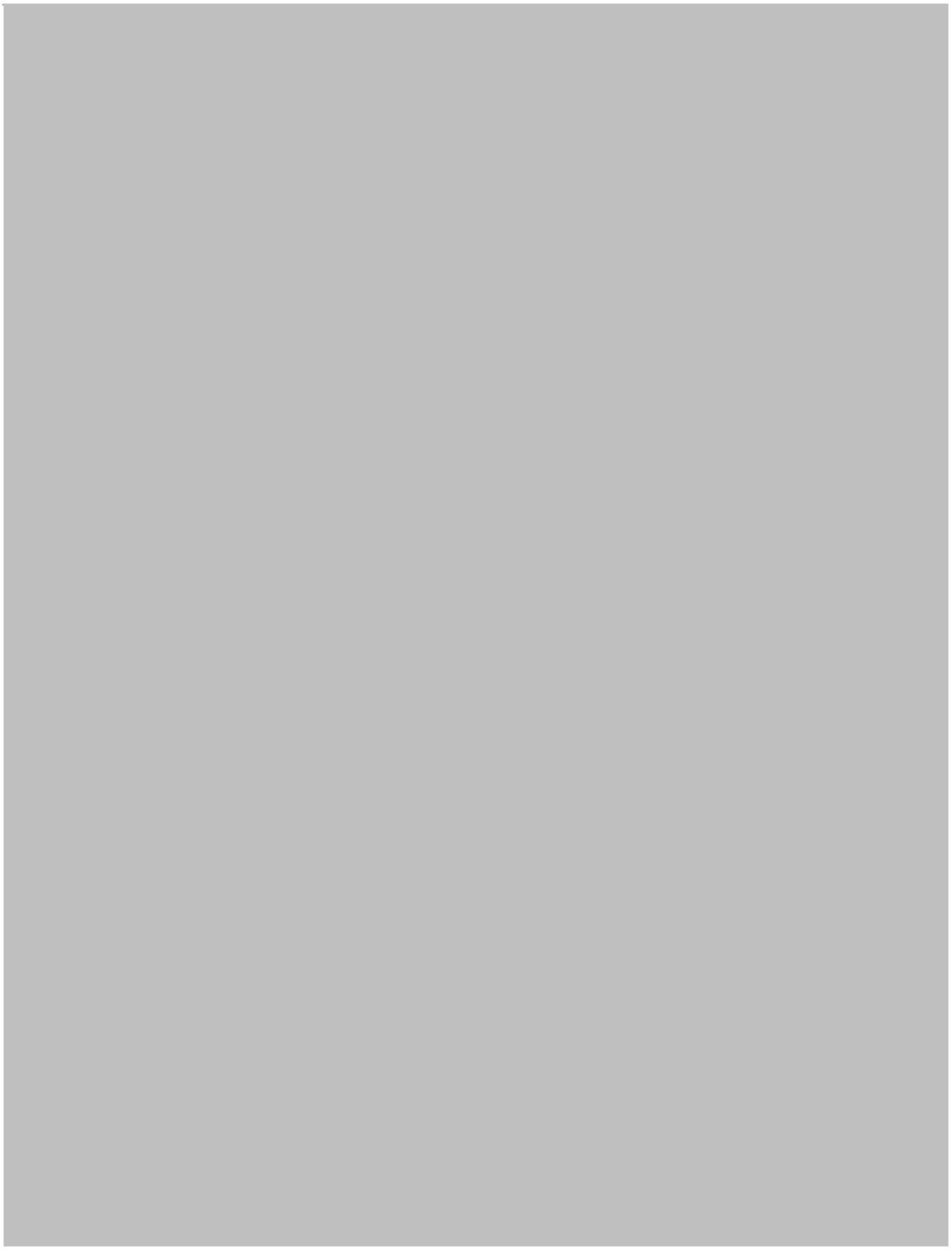


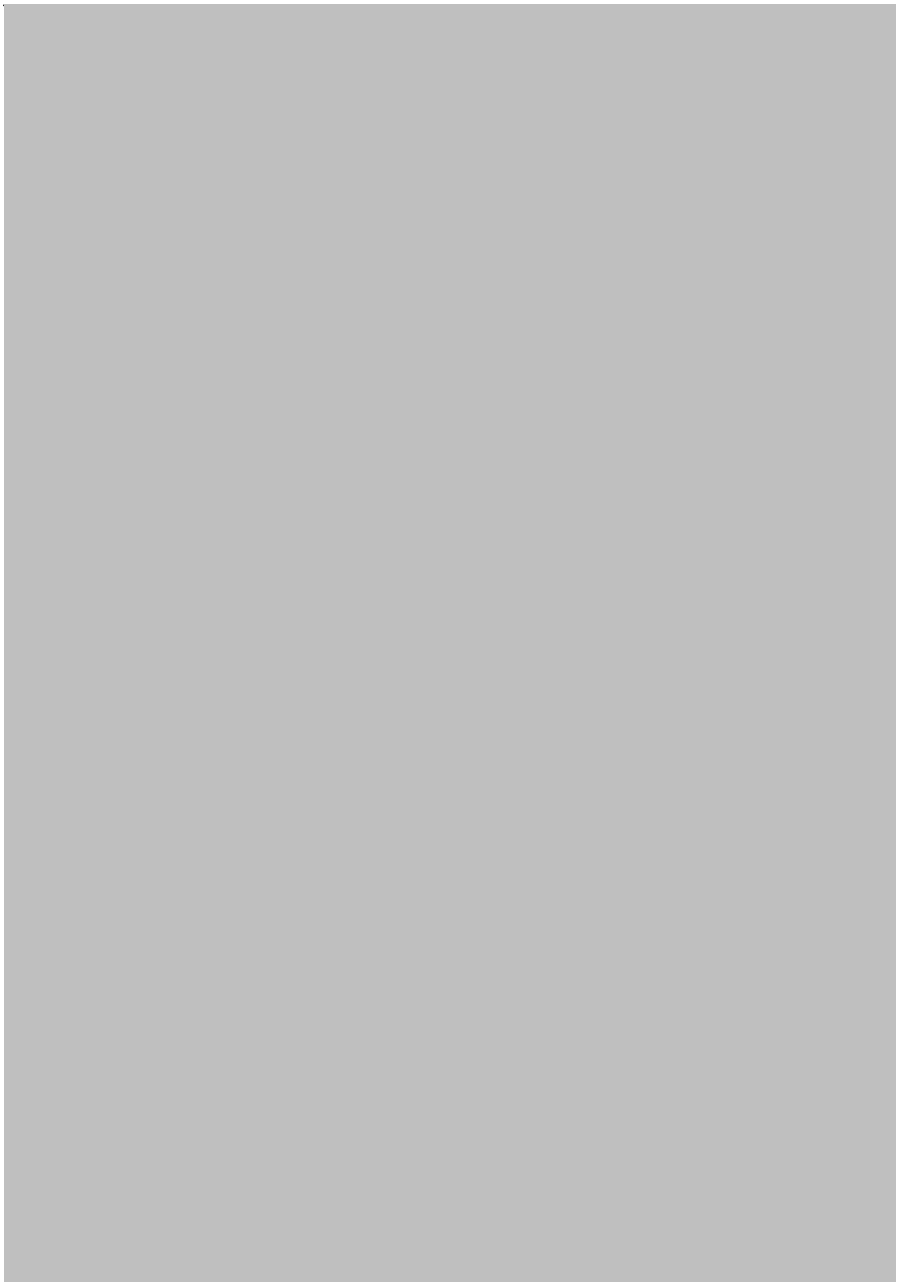




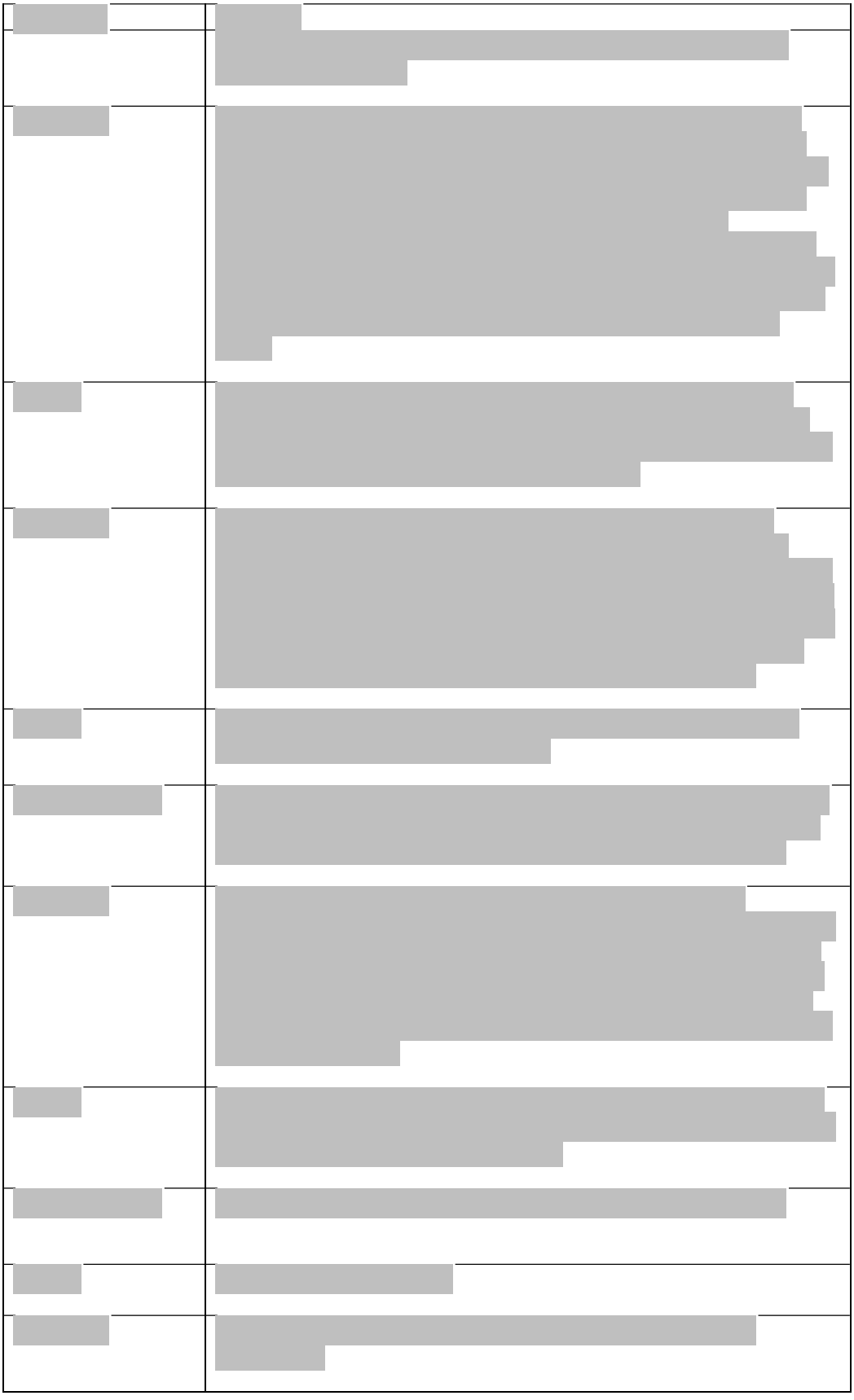


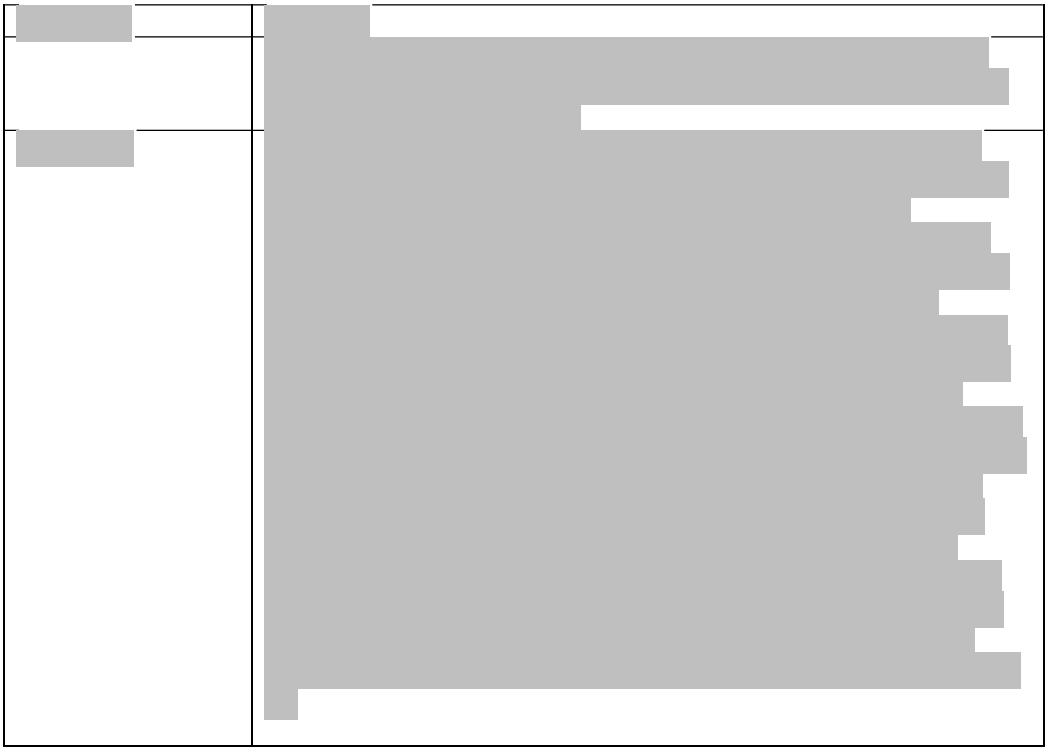




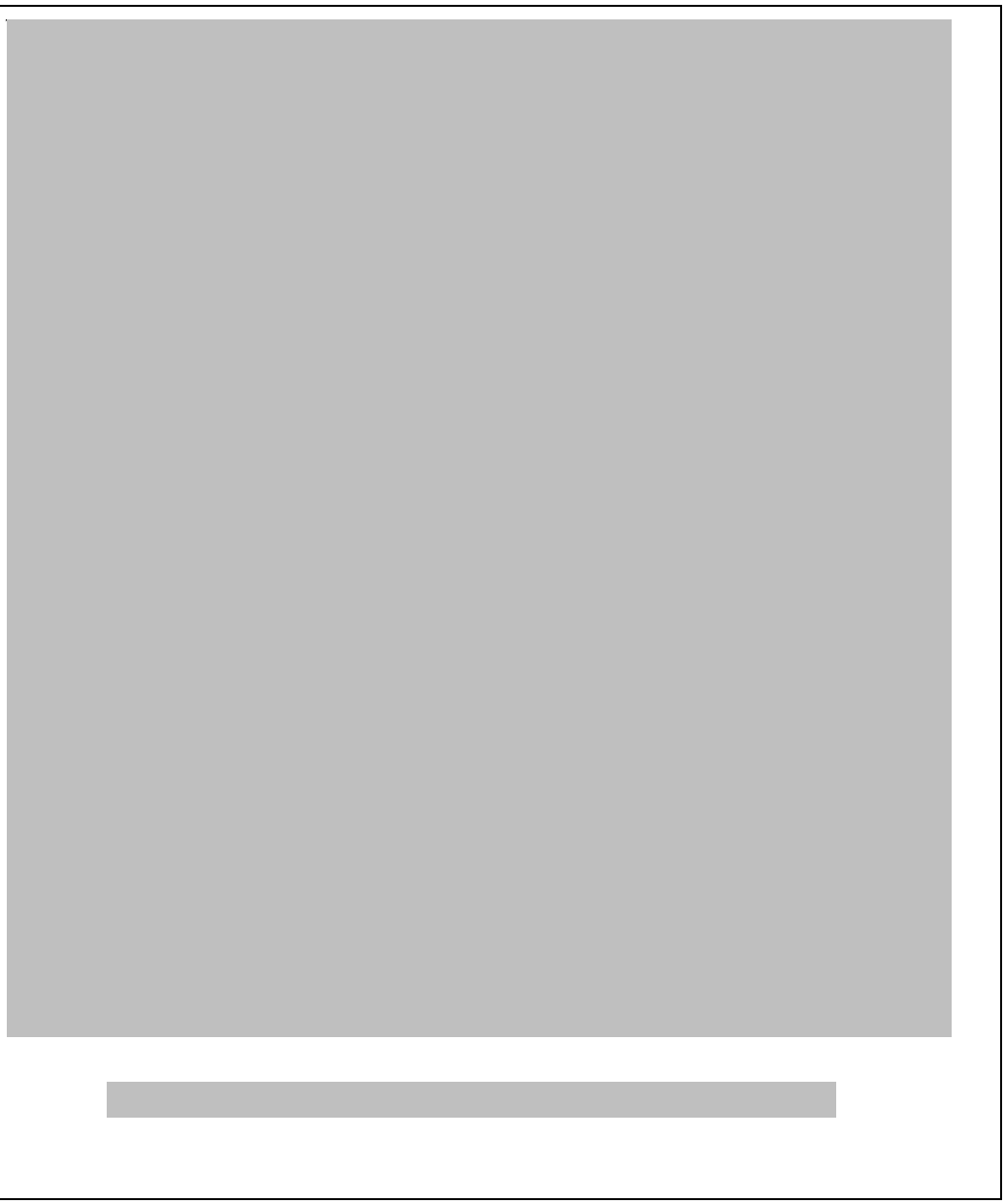


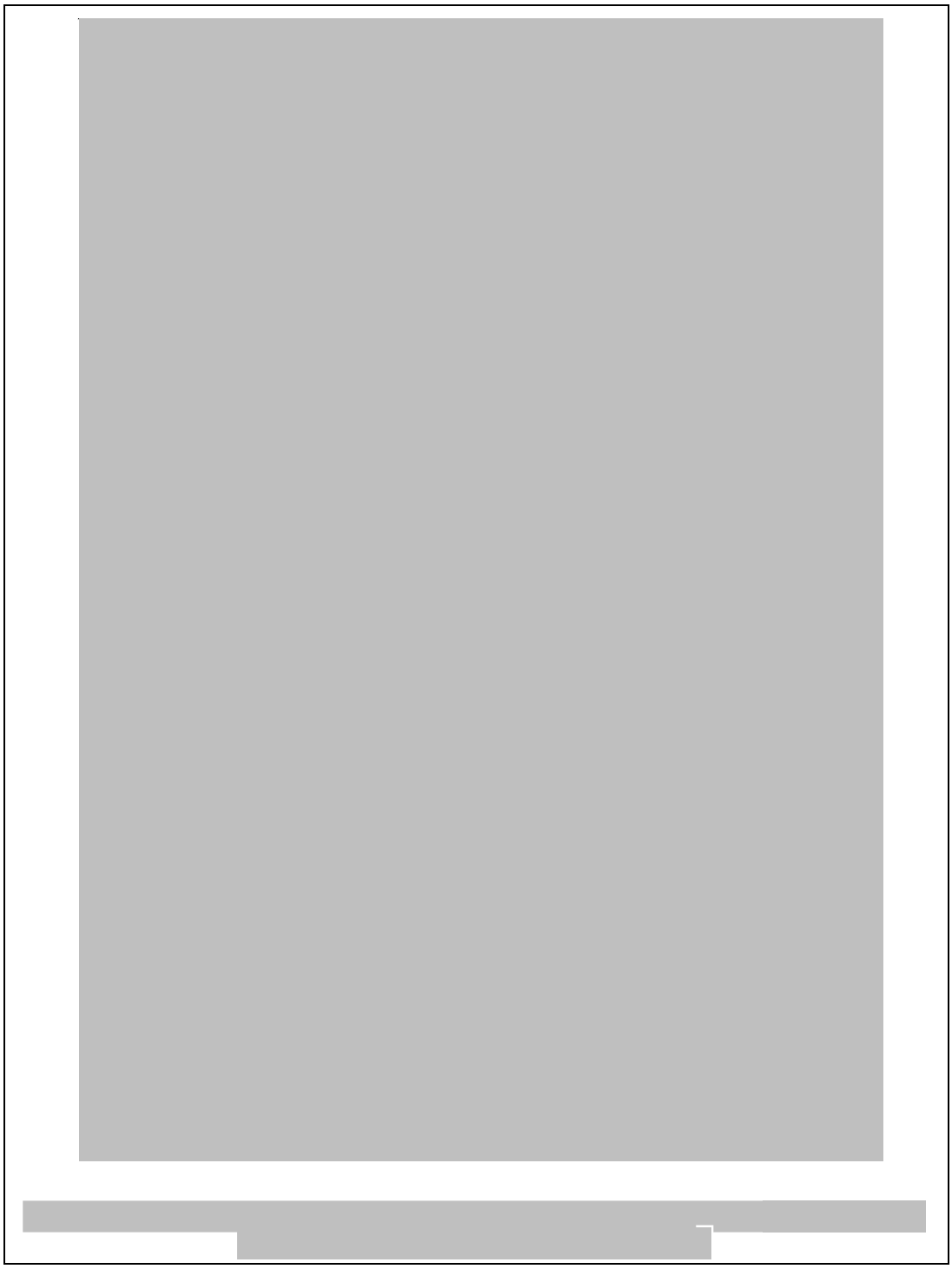
Appendix III: Motley Focus Group Transcription

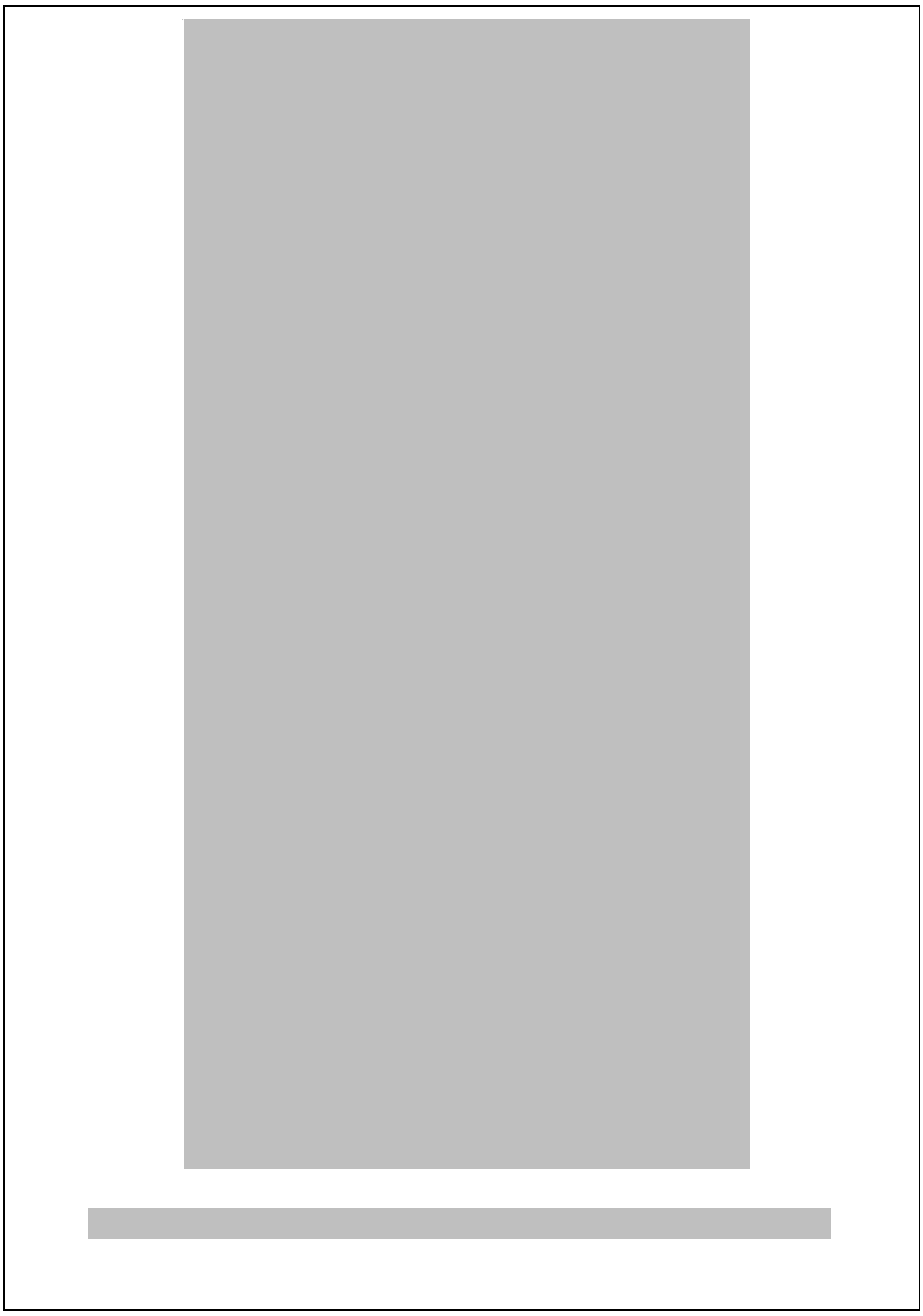




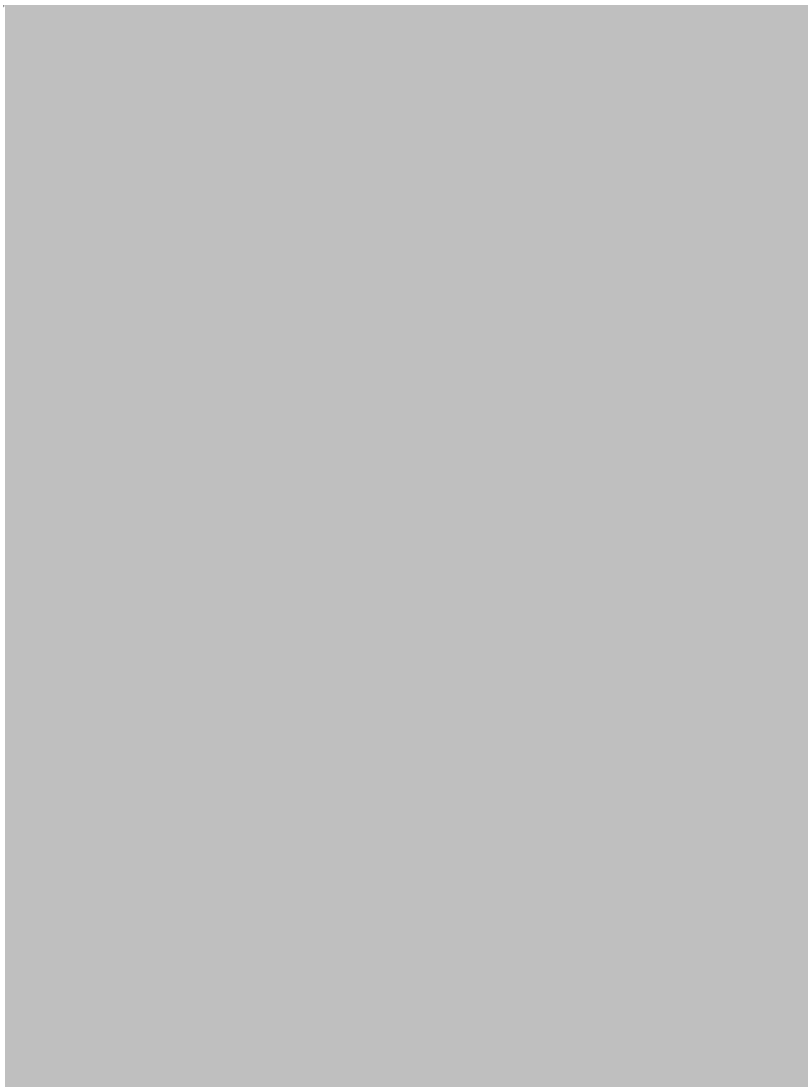
Appendix IV: Photographs of Objects

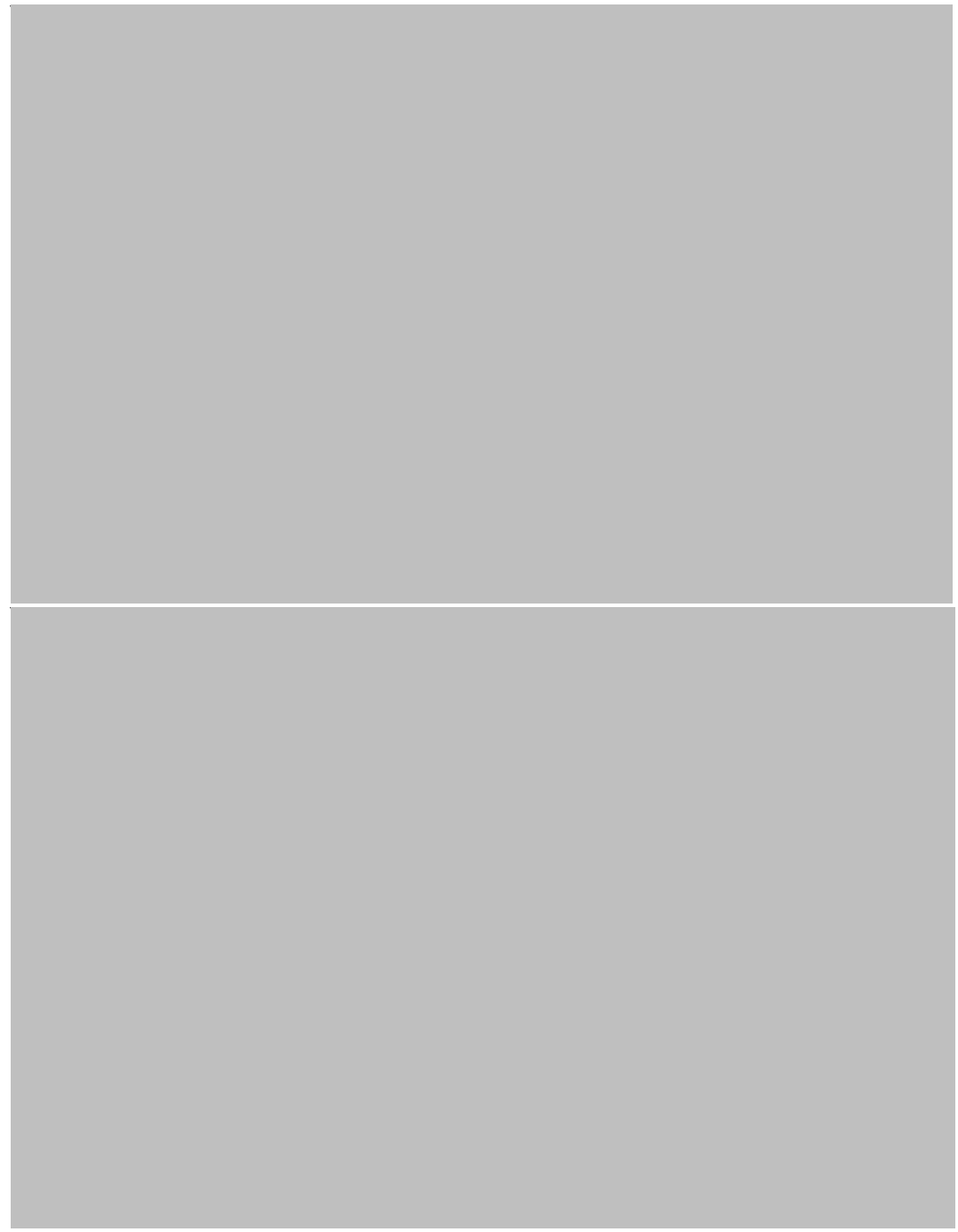


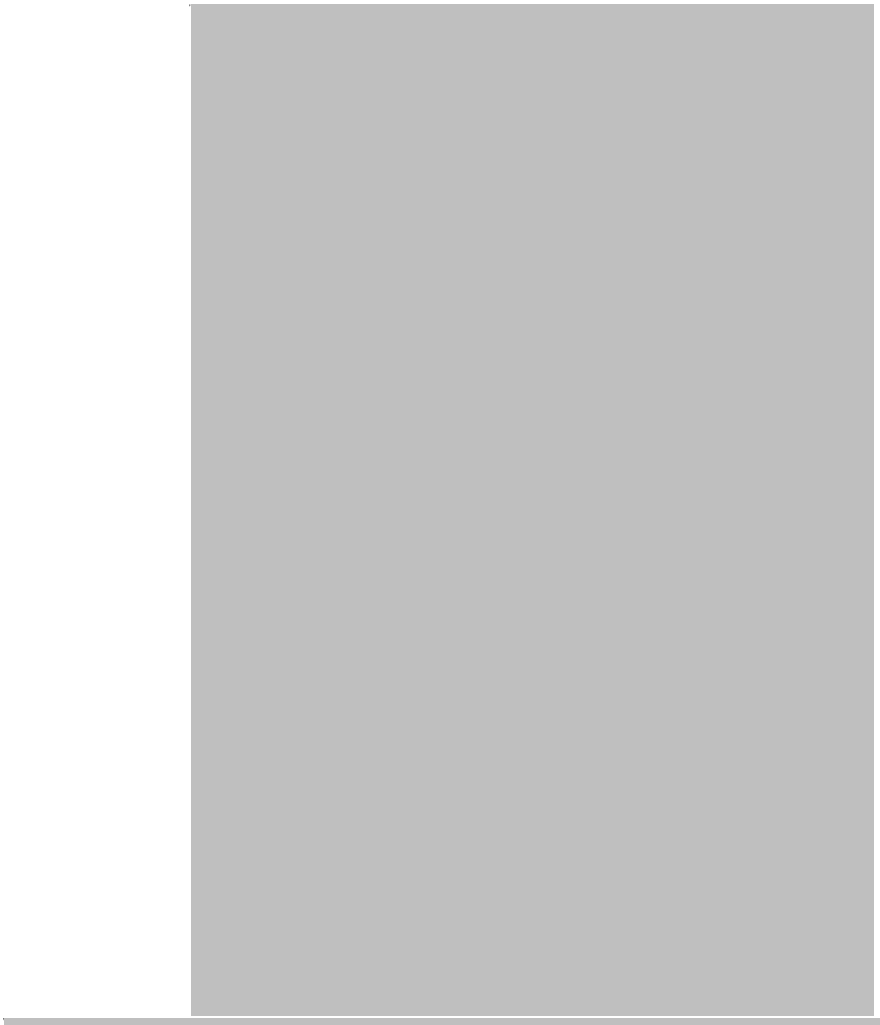


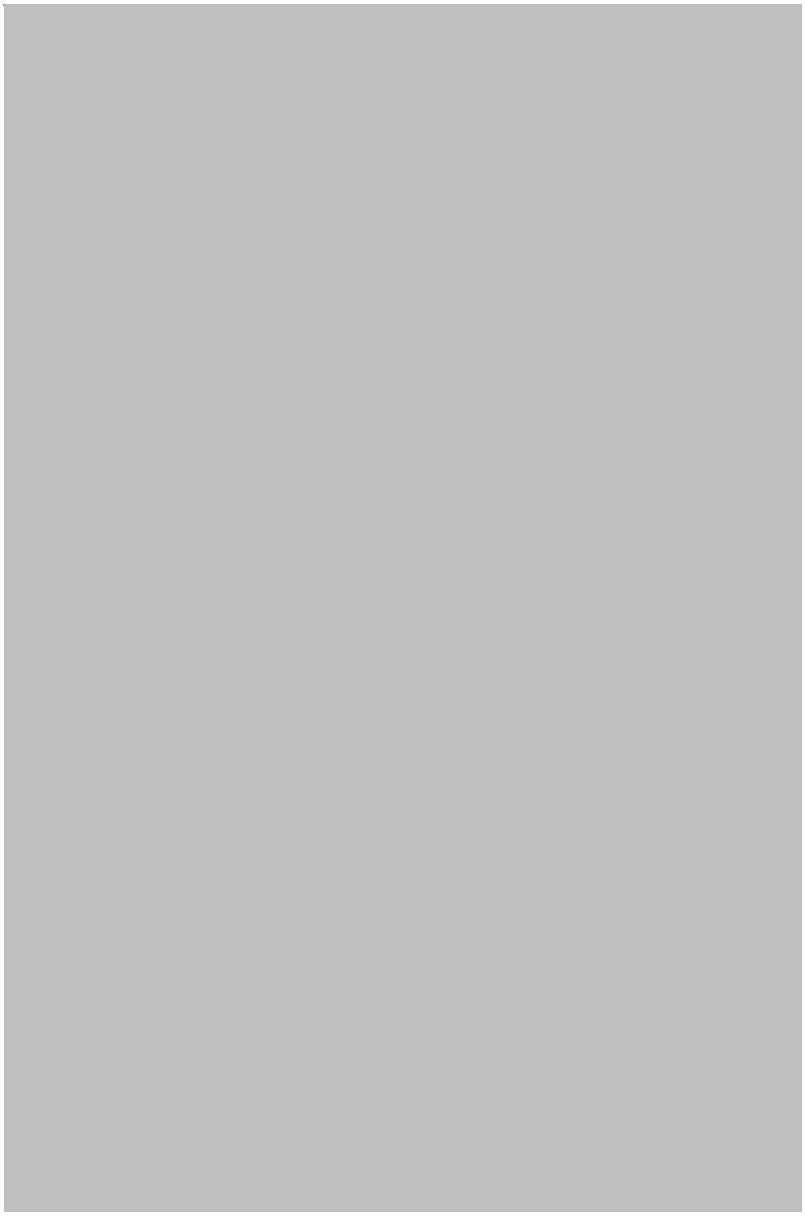


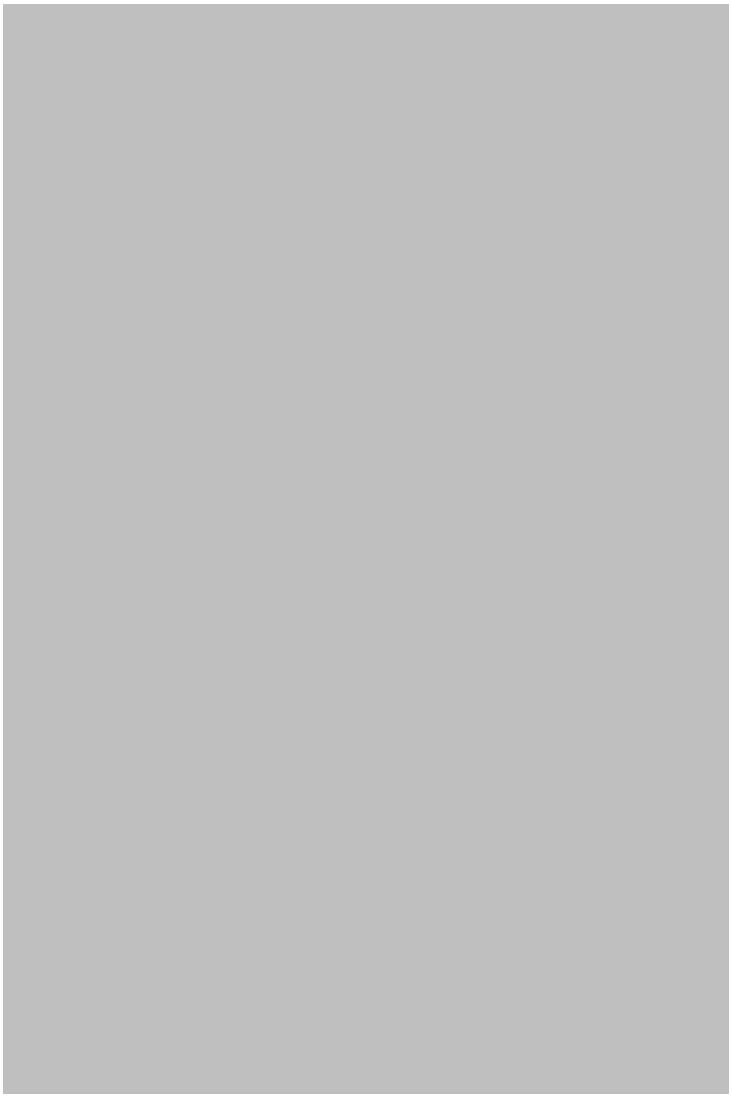
Appendix V: Interview Photographs

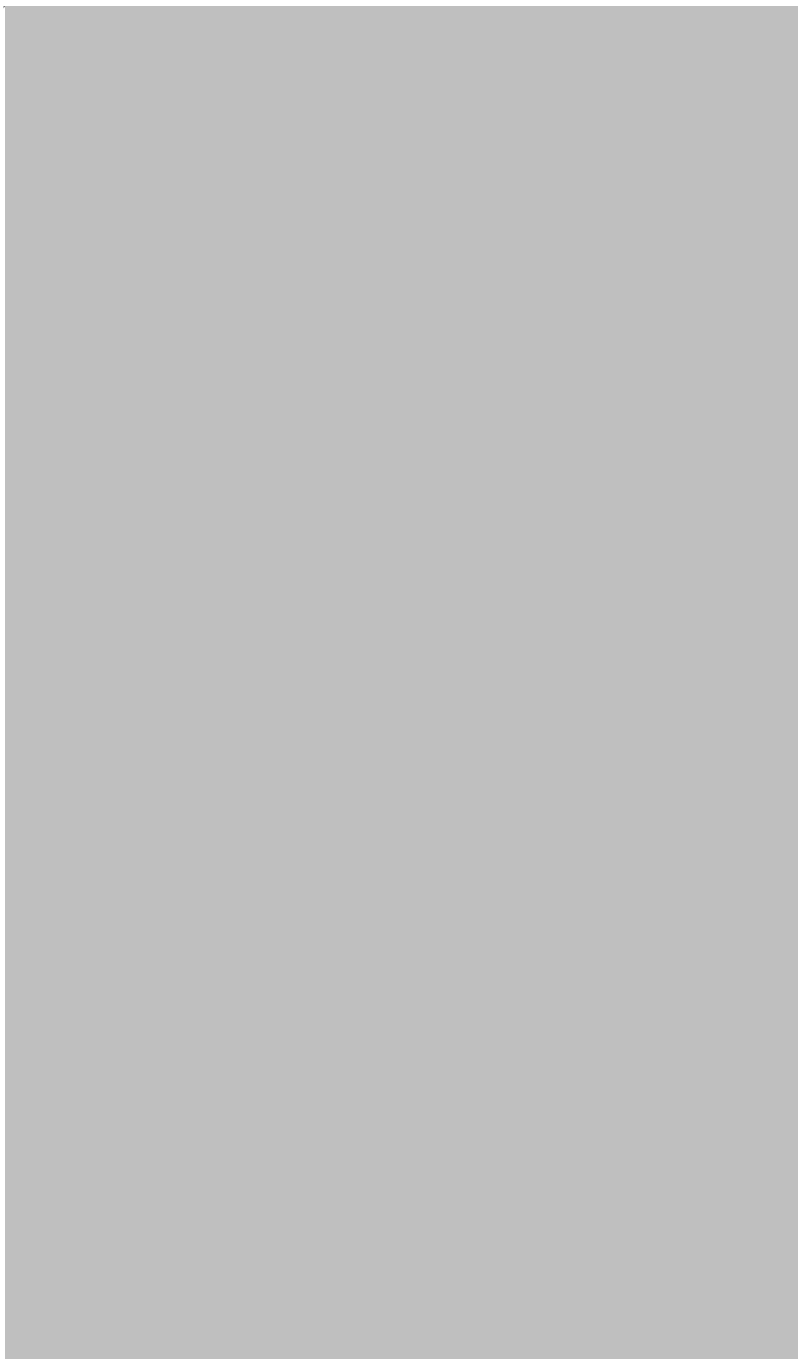


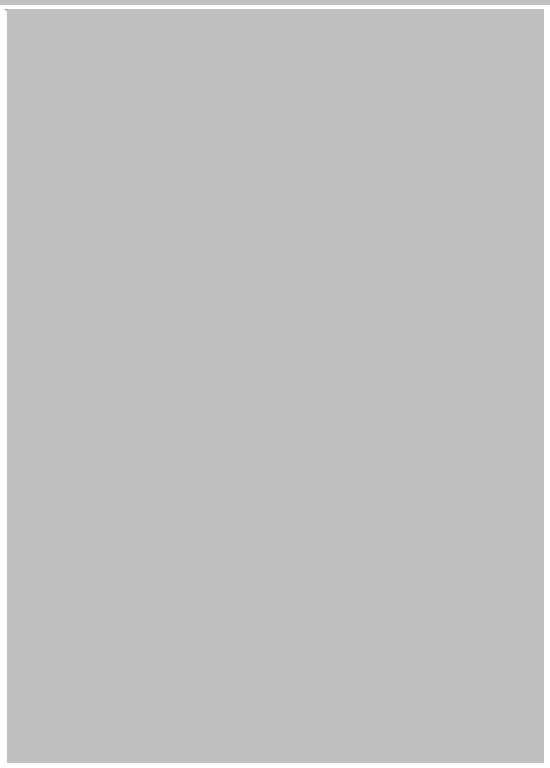


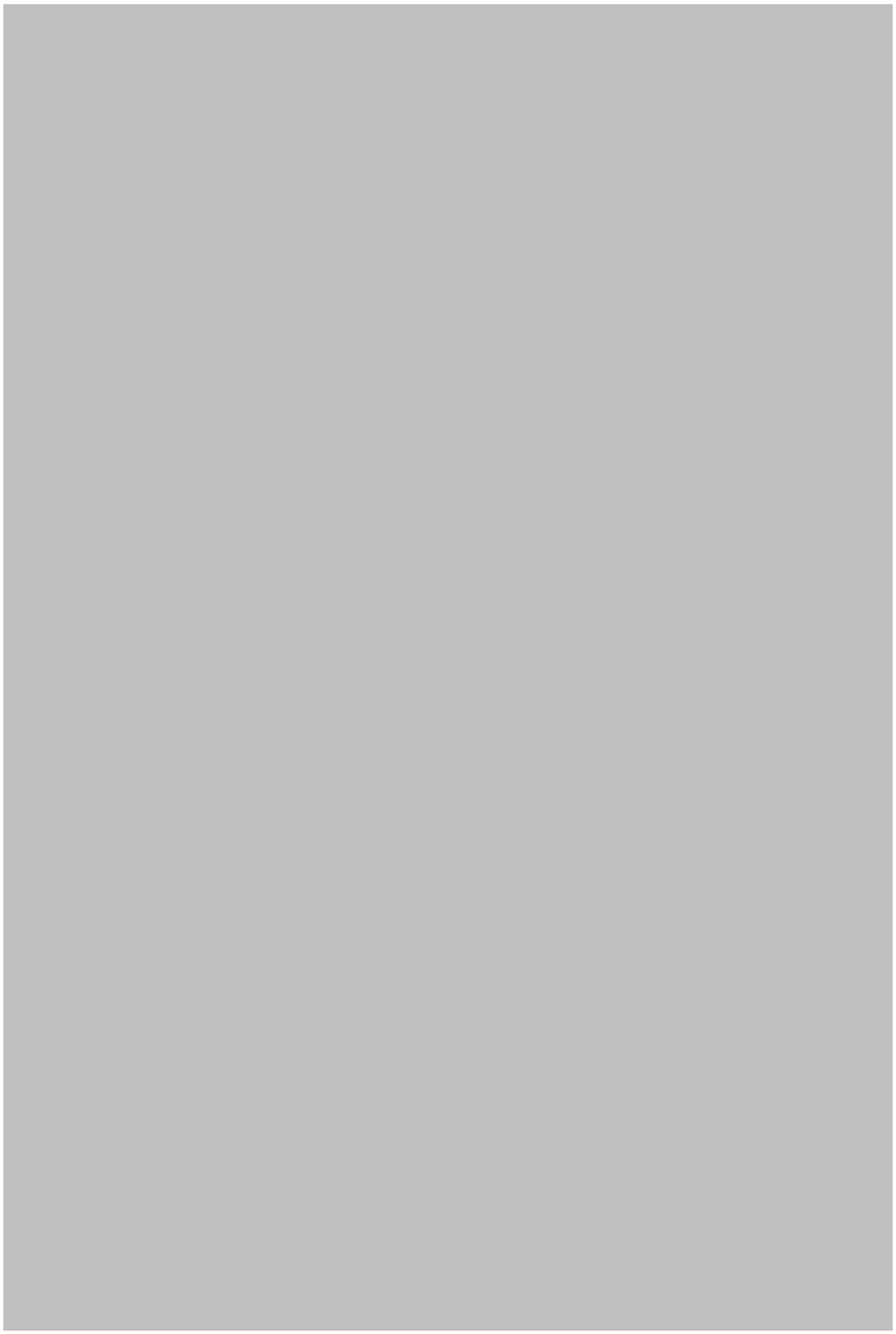


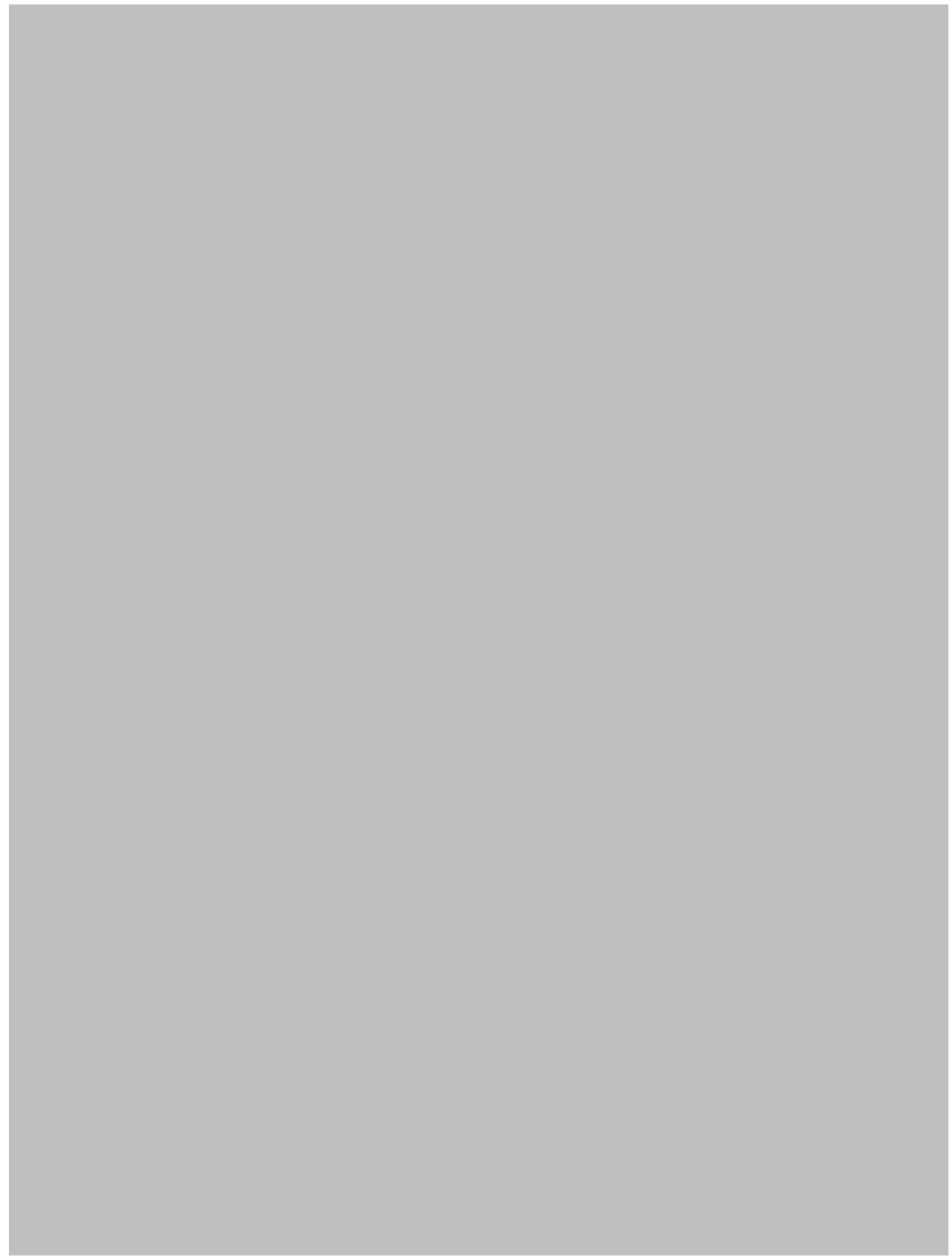


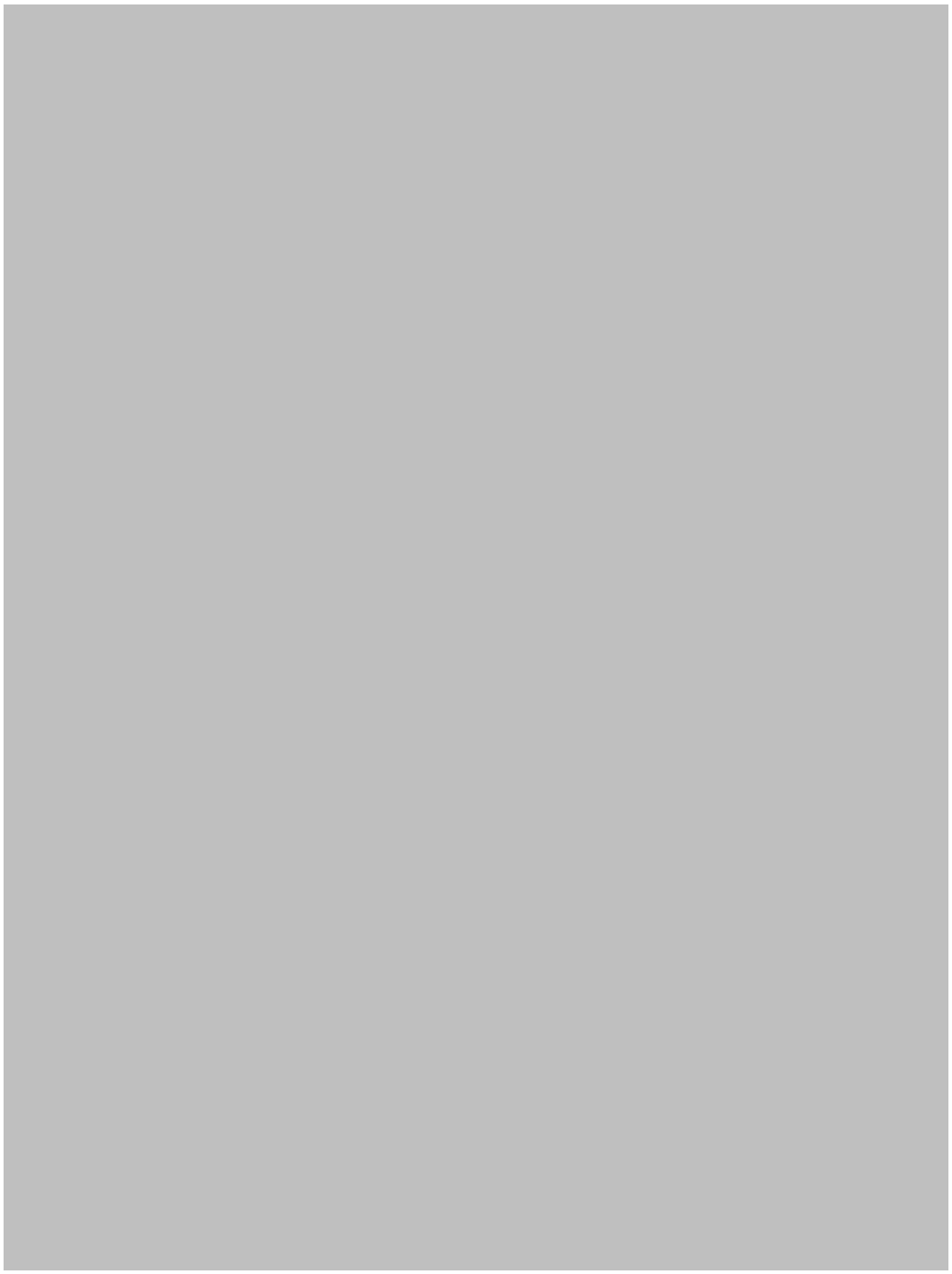


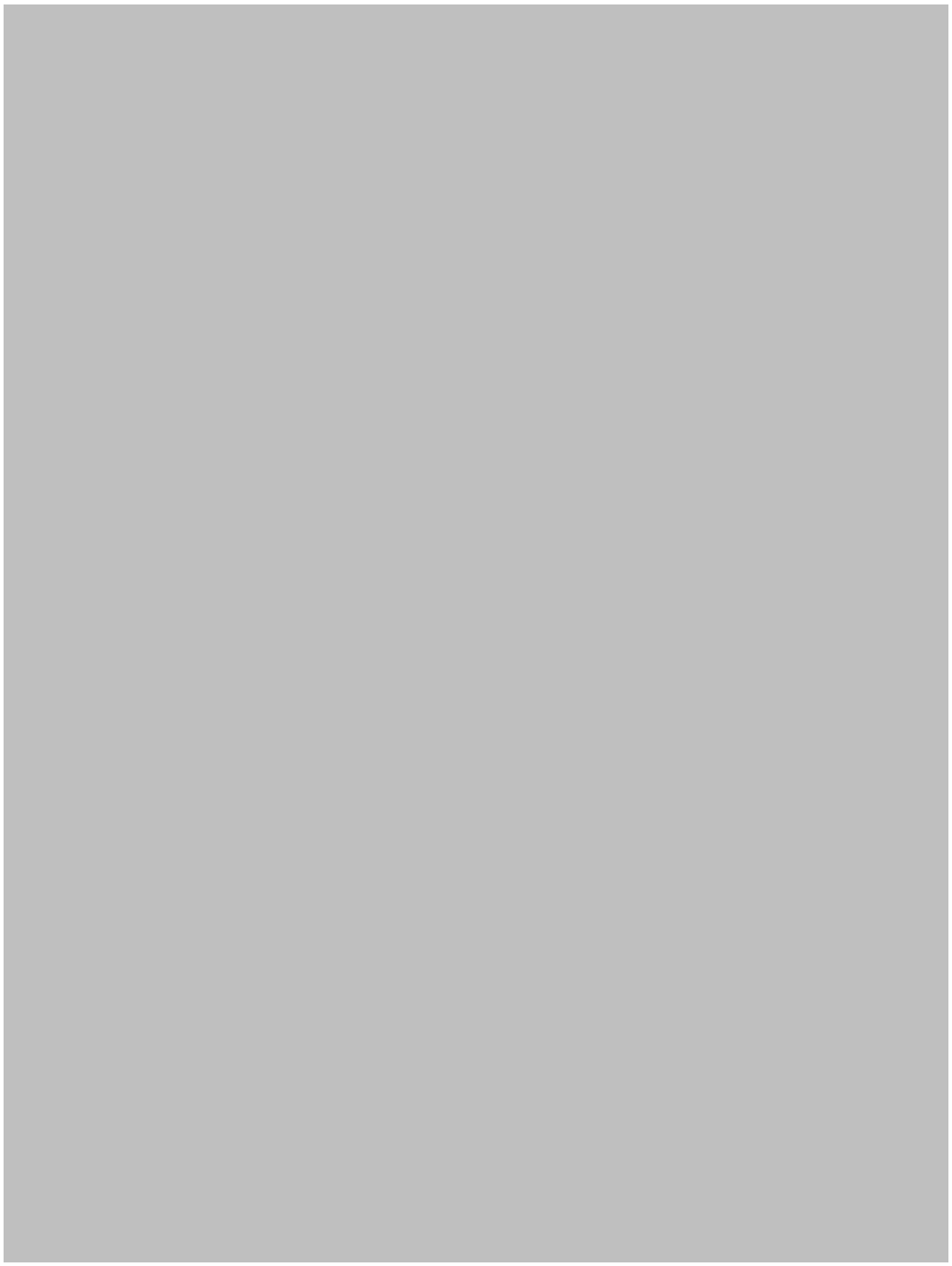












Appendix VI: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule: Course Leader Interviews

Before recording

- Participant information and consent form.
- Explain audio recording and the opportunity to withdraw from the study.

Opening

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed today.

I have approached you for an interview because I am interested in talking to you about what you think the role of theatre or production design is in the creative process and, more specifically, what the job of a theatre or production designer is in a creative process.

I am interested in whether and how this is expressed through your course – the teaching, learning and assessment methods you employ.

I am interviewing people from a variety of different settings, drama schools, universities and independent courses.

My background is not in theatre design – I work as a Senior Lecturer in Work-Based Learning and I am interested in the ways in which pedagogy shapes professional identity and creative practice. My interest in design stems from when I studied it as an undergraduate – as part of a general Theatre Studies course at the University of Lancaster, and through completion of an MA in Design at the old Manchester School of Art (now MMU).

The interview is in three parts.

- An introduction to you, background, and your choice of image
- Discussion about the course
- Exploration of any influences outside of the course on the course. Institutional context and professional context.

Introductions

In preparation for this interview, I asked you to find an image that you felt expressed the philosophy and focus of this course. However, before we come to that image would you be happy to give a summary of your background and how you came to be teaching design?

Course pedagogy section

The Image

- Could you describe what the image shows?
- Was this your first choice of image?
- If not, could you describe the kind of image you had hoped to show?
- If it is did you have to think long about this before you decided?

- What is it about this image that captures the course?
- If you could change this image in any way – what would you change and why?

Teaching and Learning
- What are students asked to do in their first few weeks on the course?
- How would you describe the progression through the course?

Studio-based forms of instruction
- Do all students work in the studio?
- What proportion of their time is spent in lectures, in the studio, working at home?

Course content
- What topics do you teach?
- How are these taught, i.e. lecture, seminar, studio-based instruction?

The process
- Do students learn a particular design process or processes?
- What aspects of the creative process do you think students find challenging?

Relationship to professional practice
- Do students do group work?
- Do students do work placements?
- What do you think students' expectations are of being a designer once they graduate?

Institutional and national context

So far, we have talked about the local context of the course but I would now like to explore factors outside the course, which you think have an impact on the course.

Institutional context
- Are there any institutional factors which impact on this course?

National context
Could you describe any national factors that impact on this course?
This may include:
- Aspects of higher education policy
- Performing arts policy and/or practice

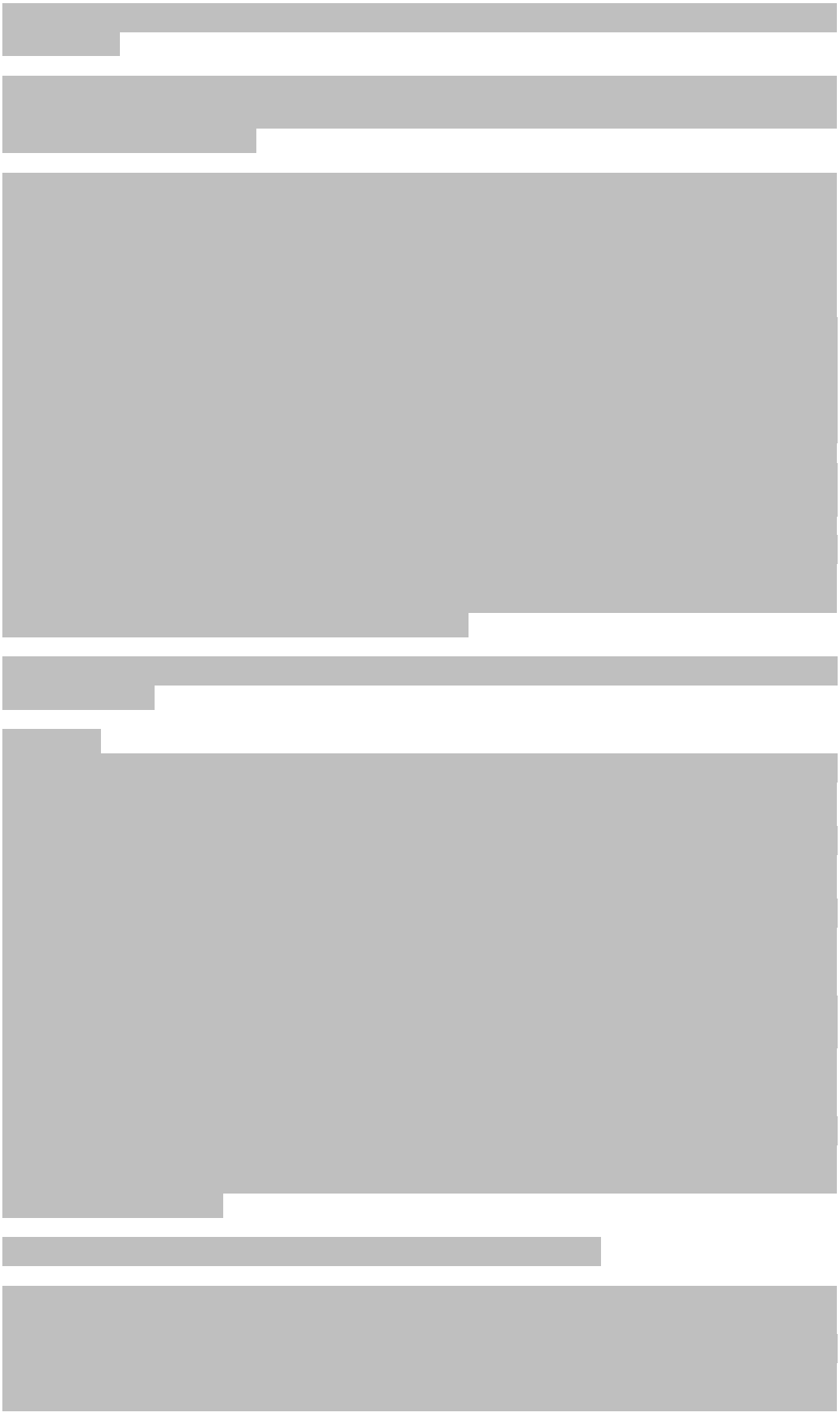
Closing section
Thank you for taking part in today's interview
Outcomes of this part of the study to be posted to the website address I gave you previously

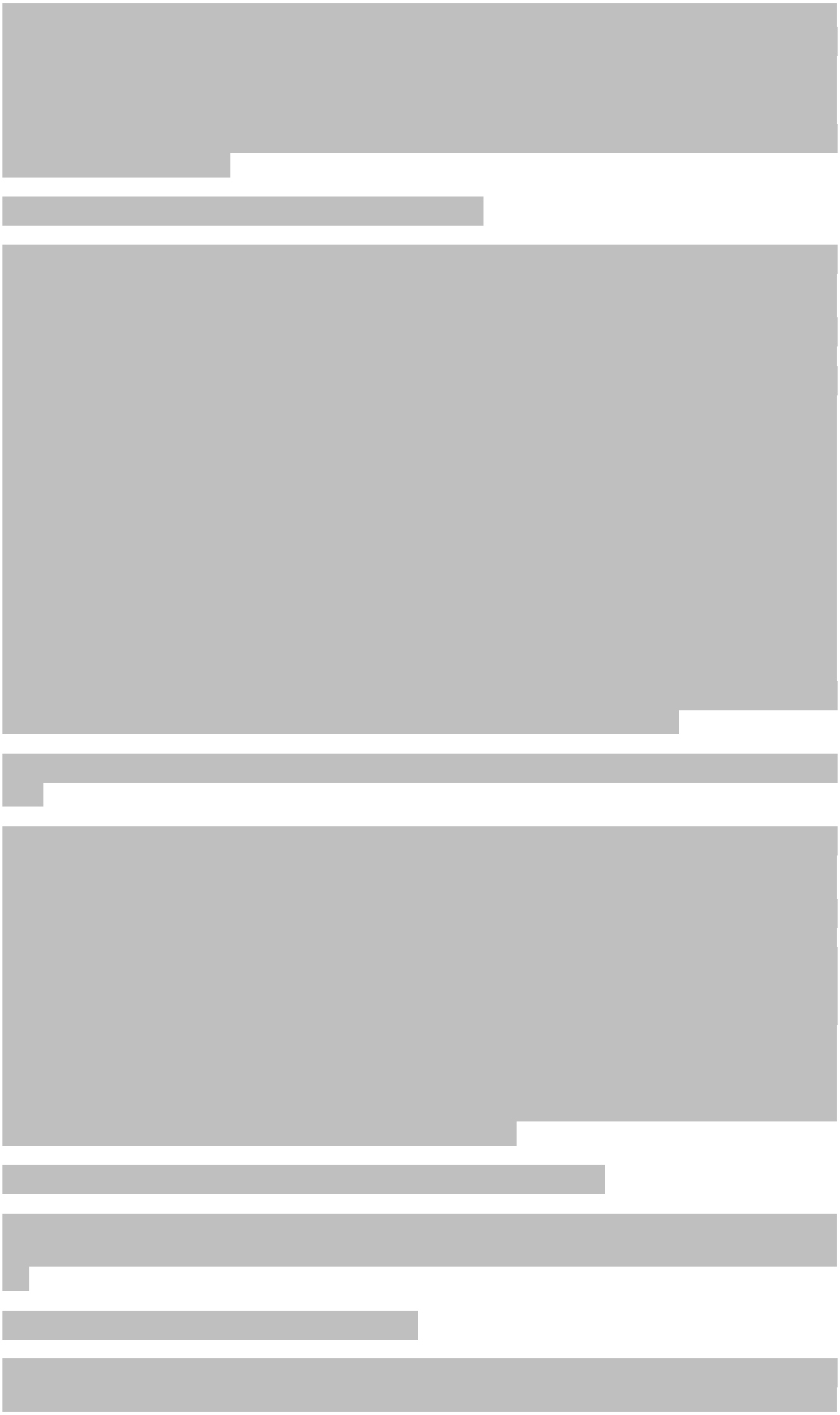
Once the transcription is complete, I will send you a copy and you can edit if you feel there are things included in there that might identify you (but I will make every attempt to anonymise your responses where I feel there might be things that could identify you)

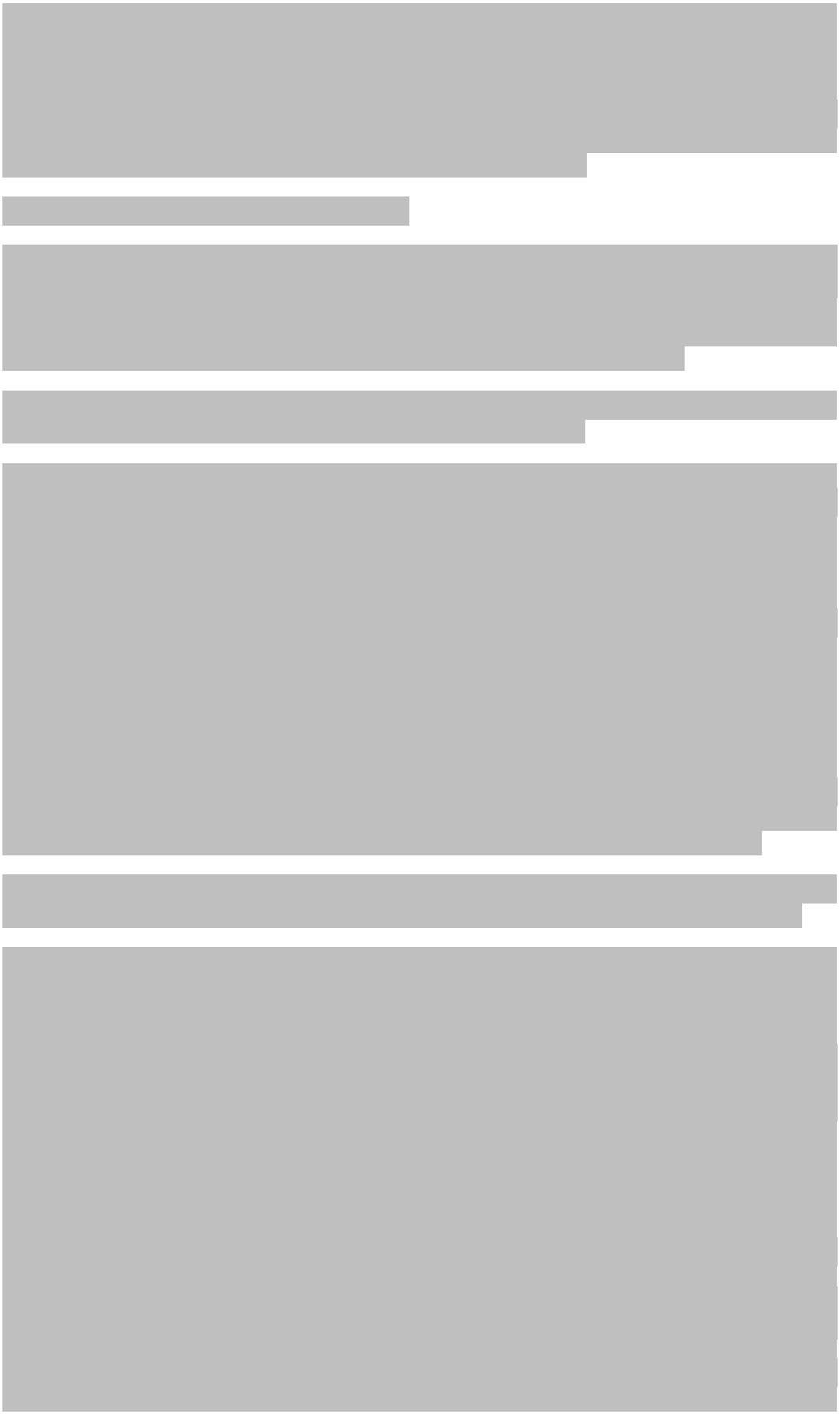
If you wish to withdraw, you have up to four weeks after the end of the interview to do so.

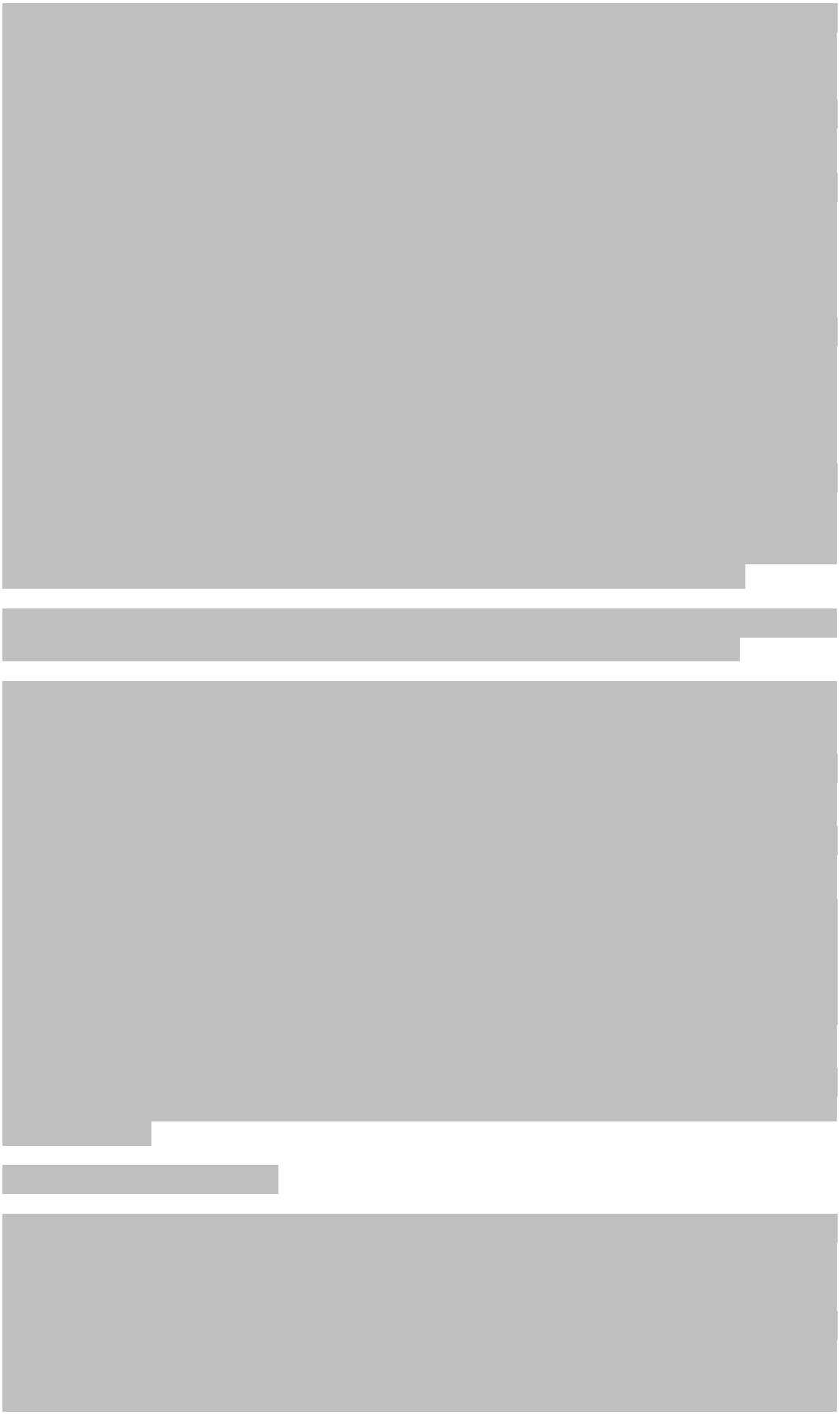
Do you have any questions for me before we finish?

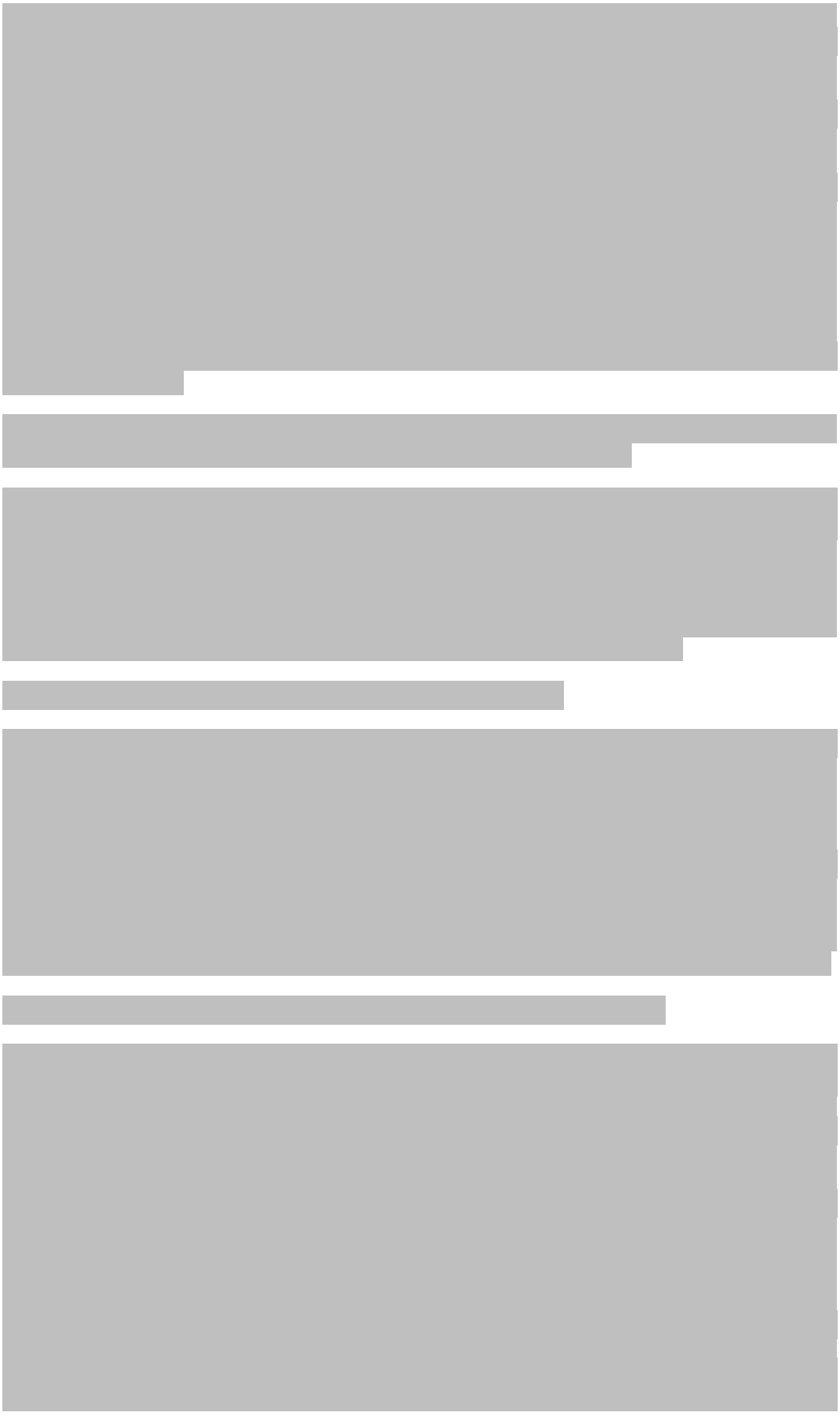
Appendix VII: Interview Transcripts

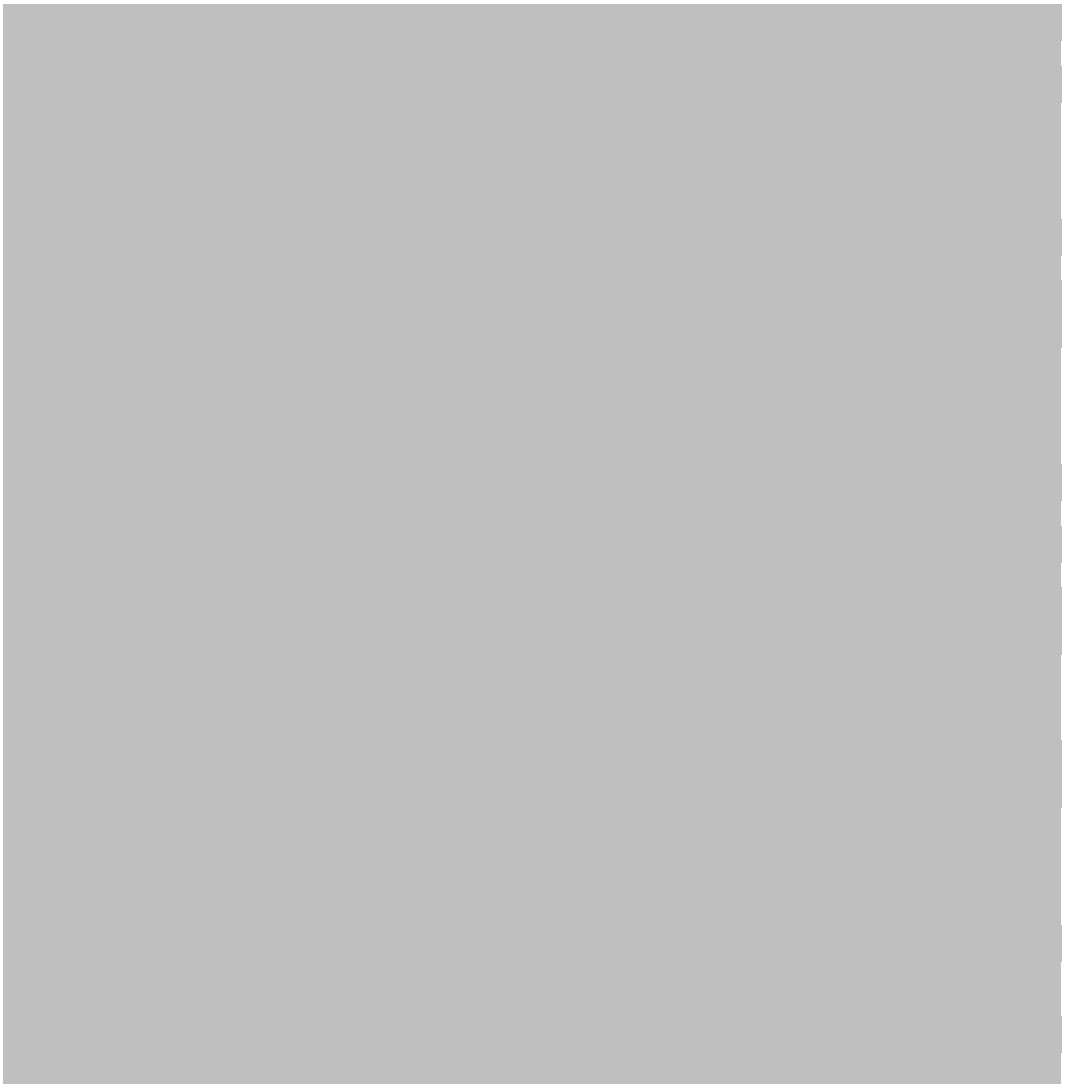


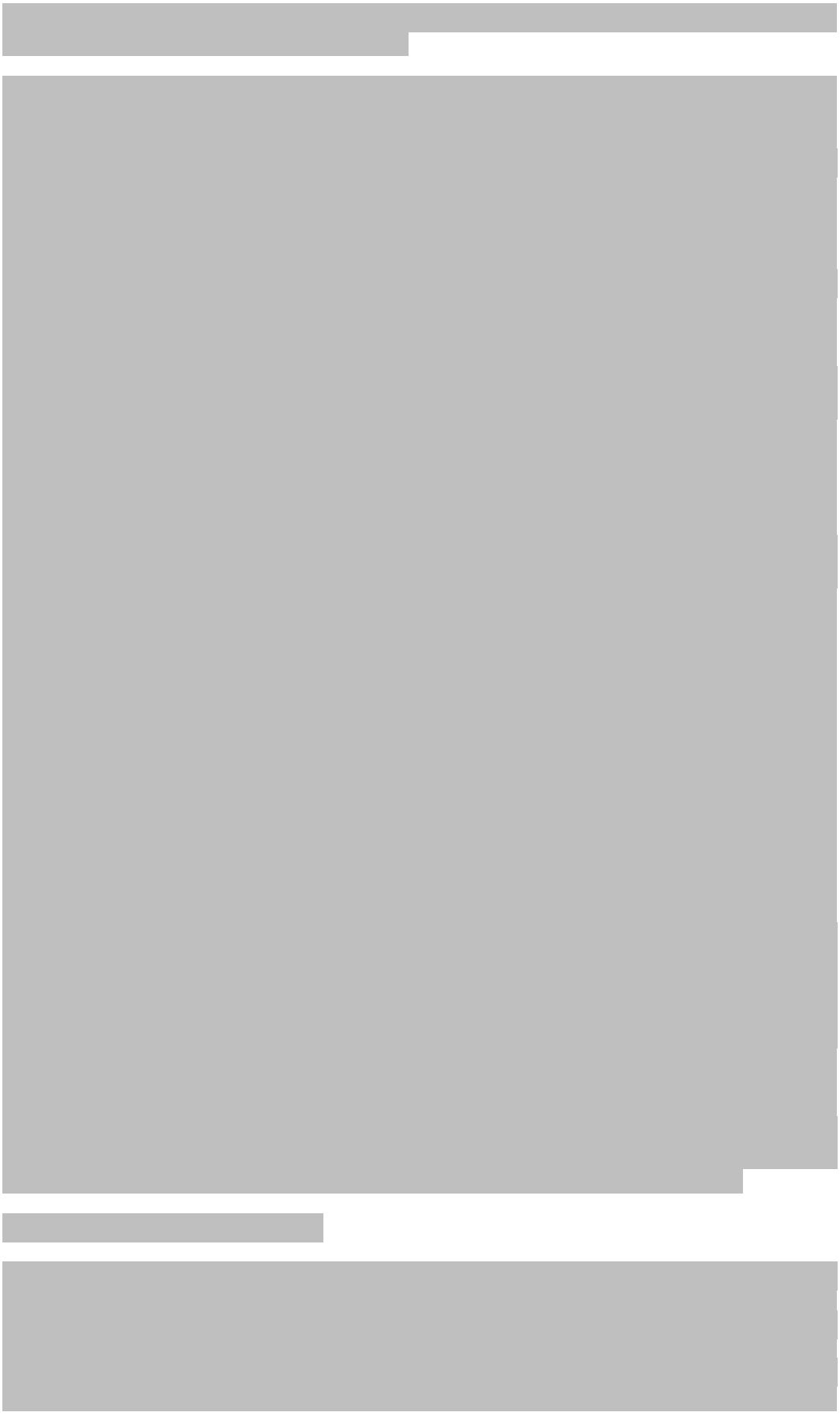


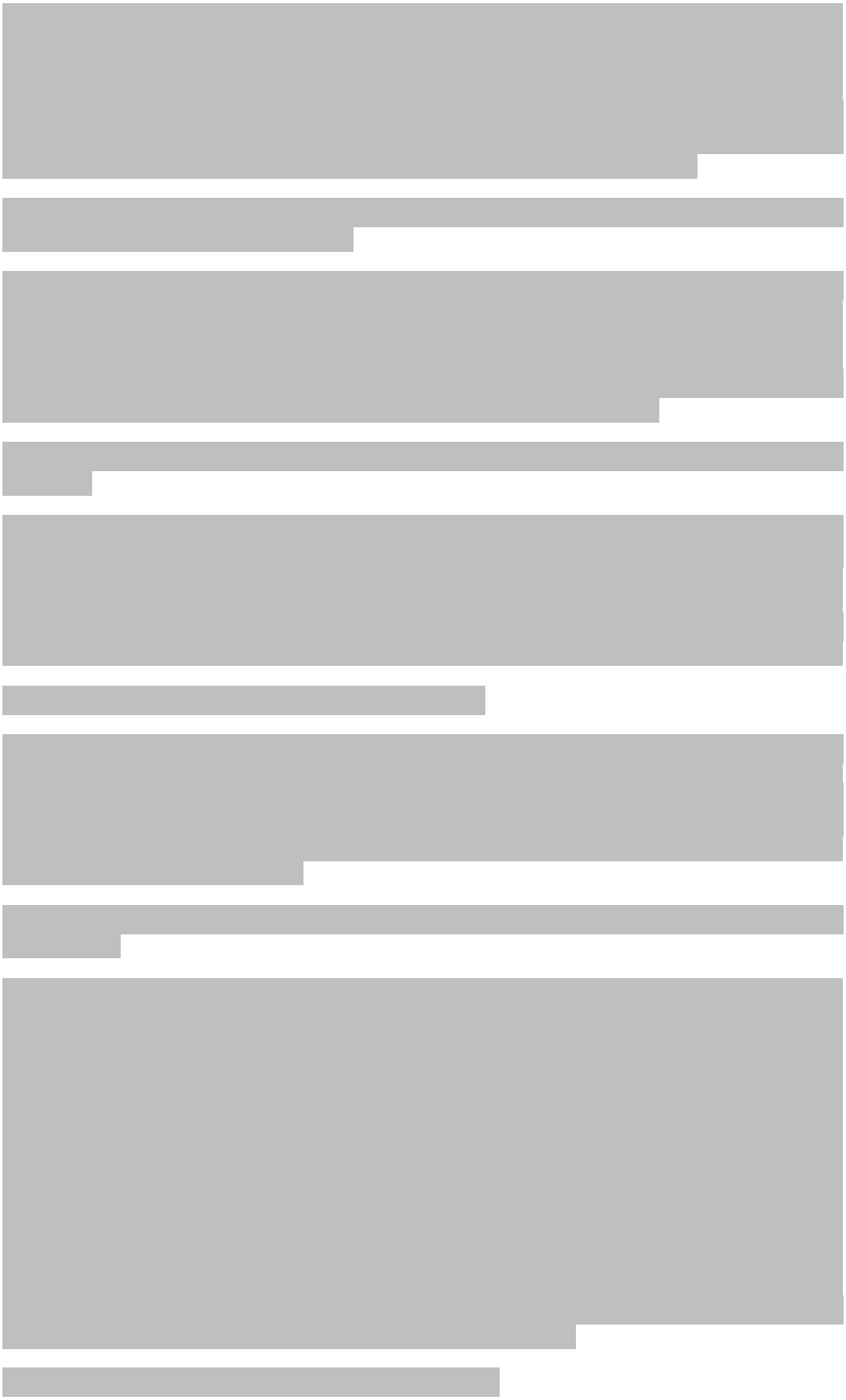


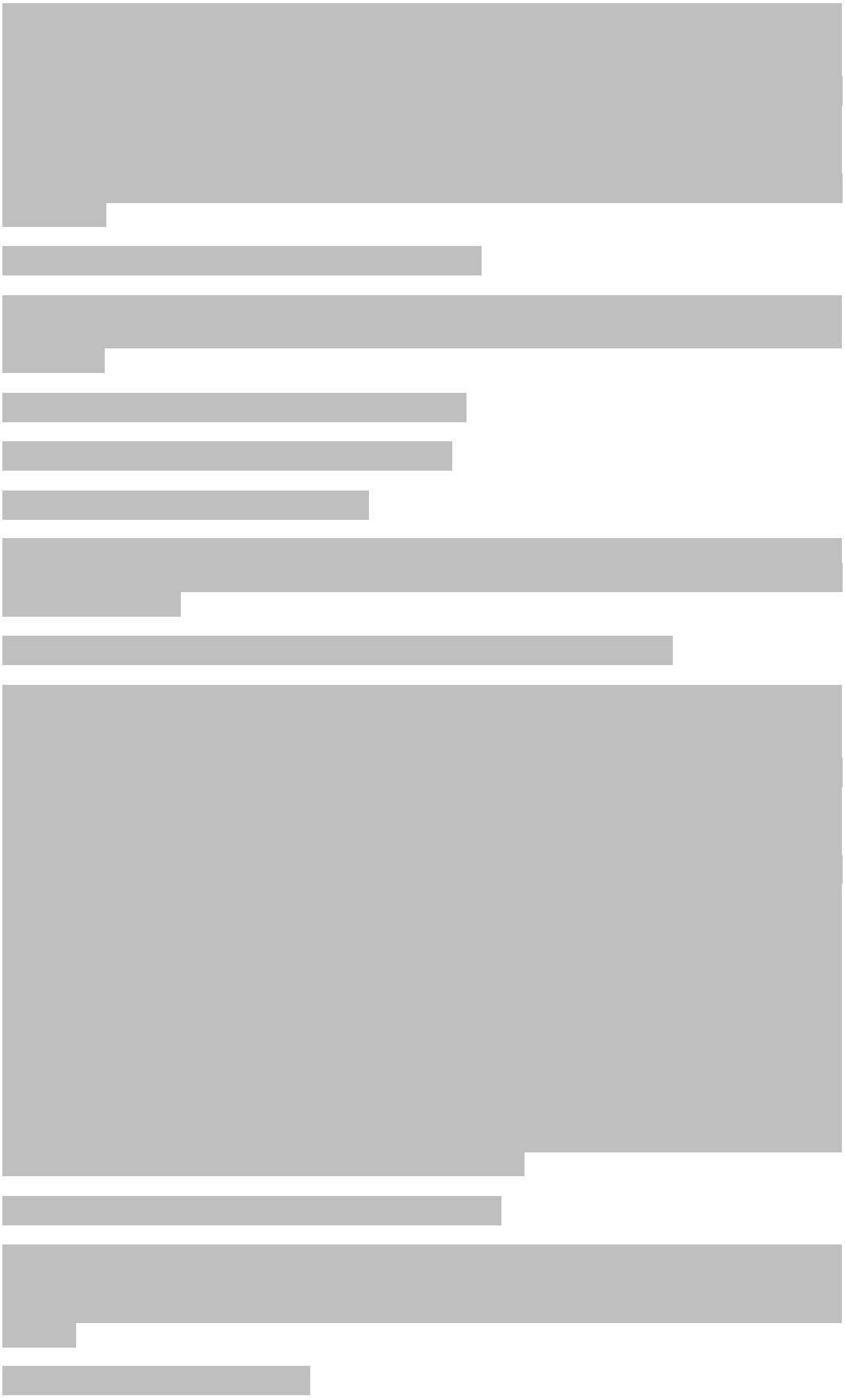


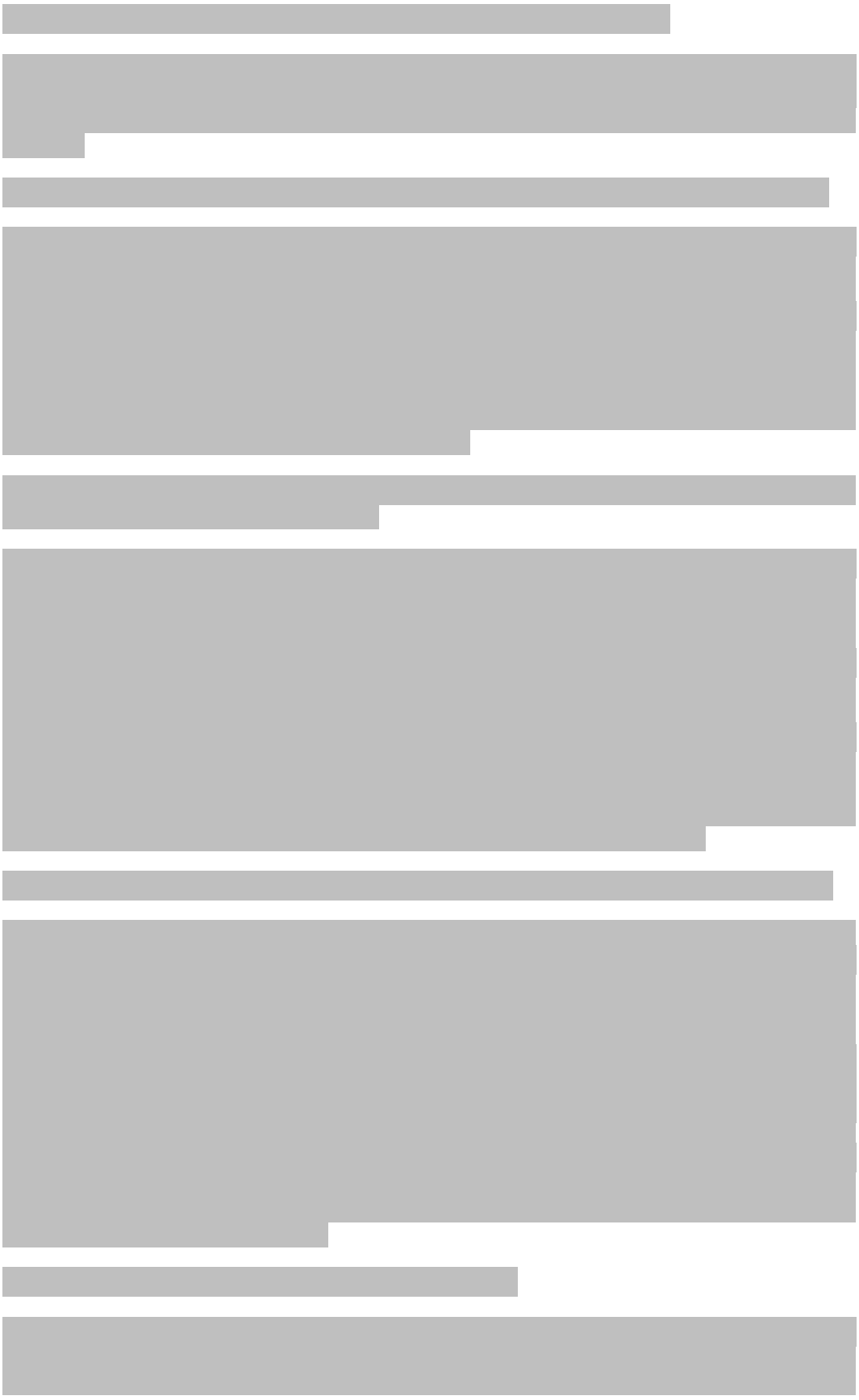


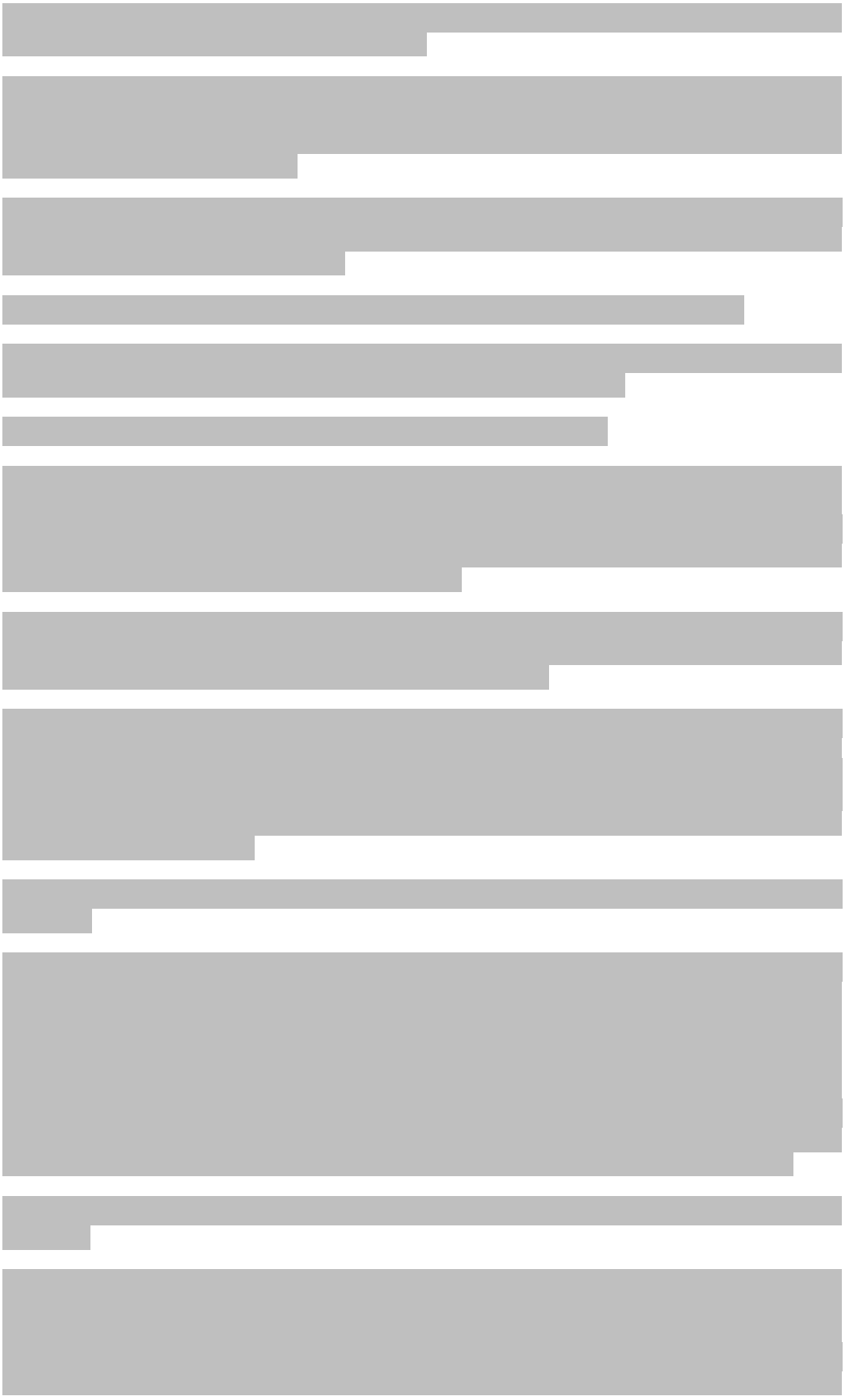


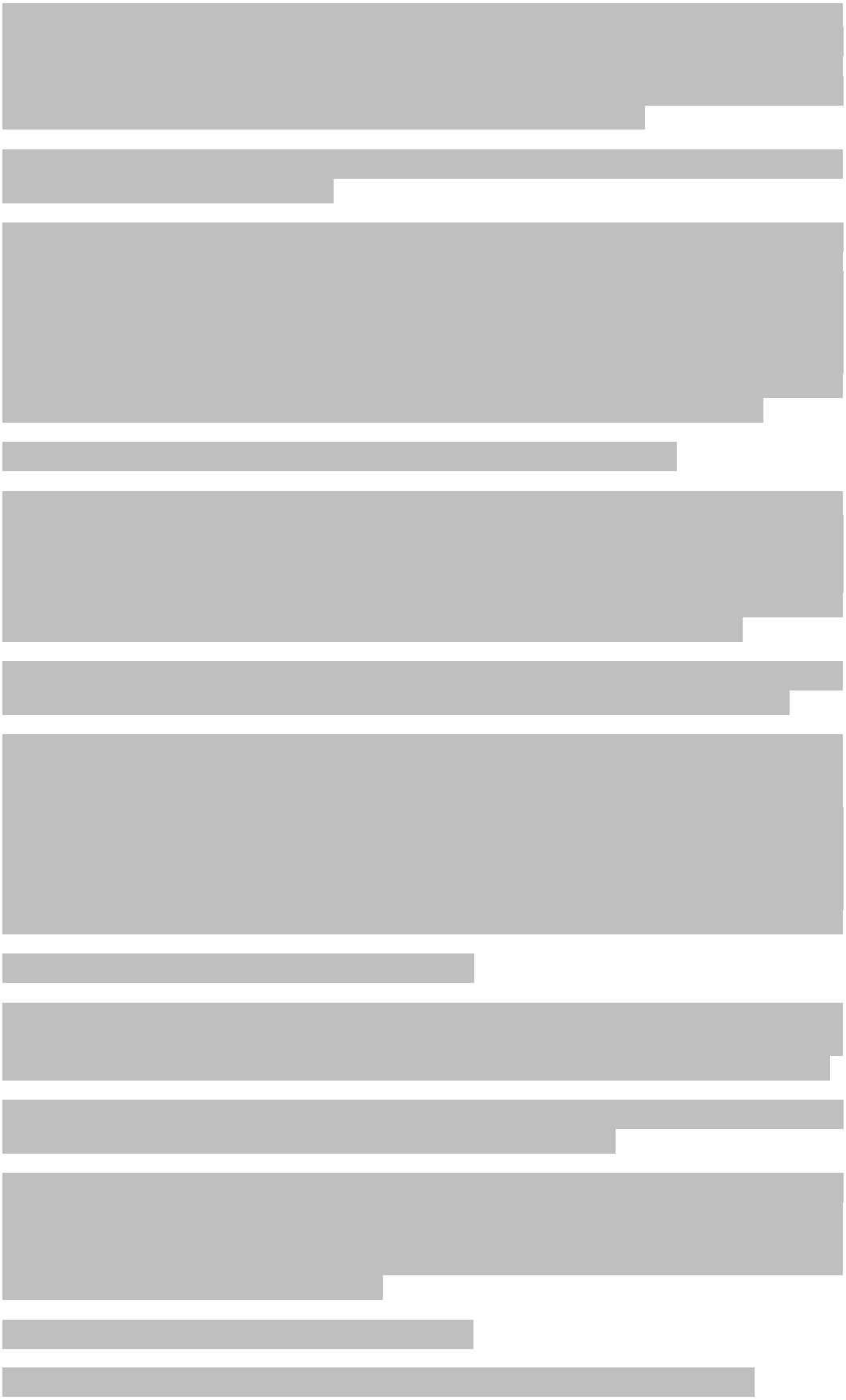


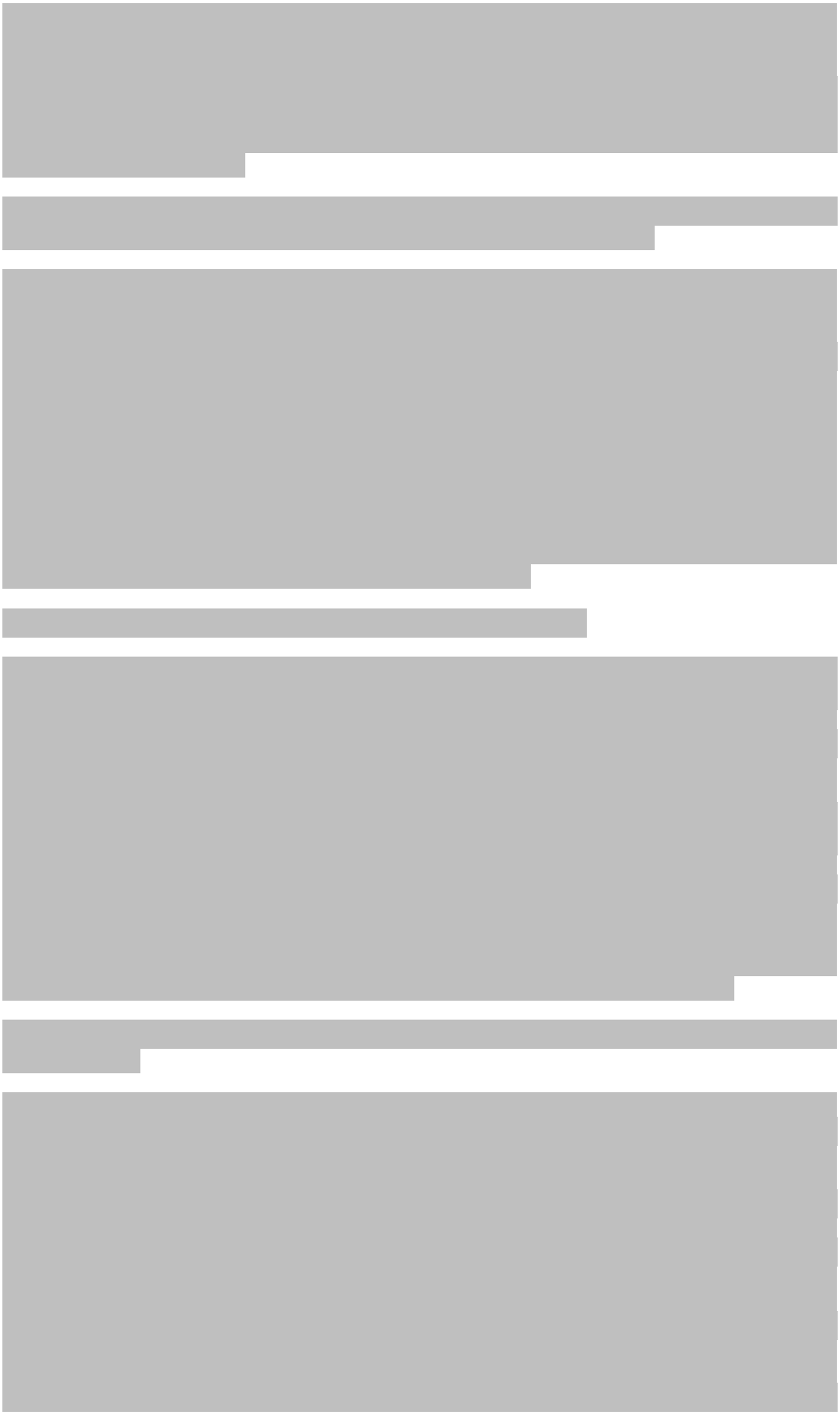


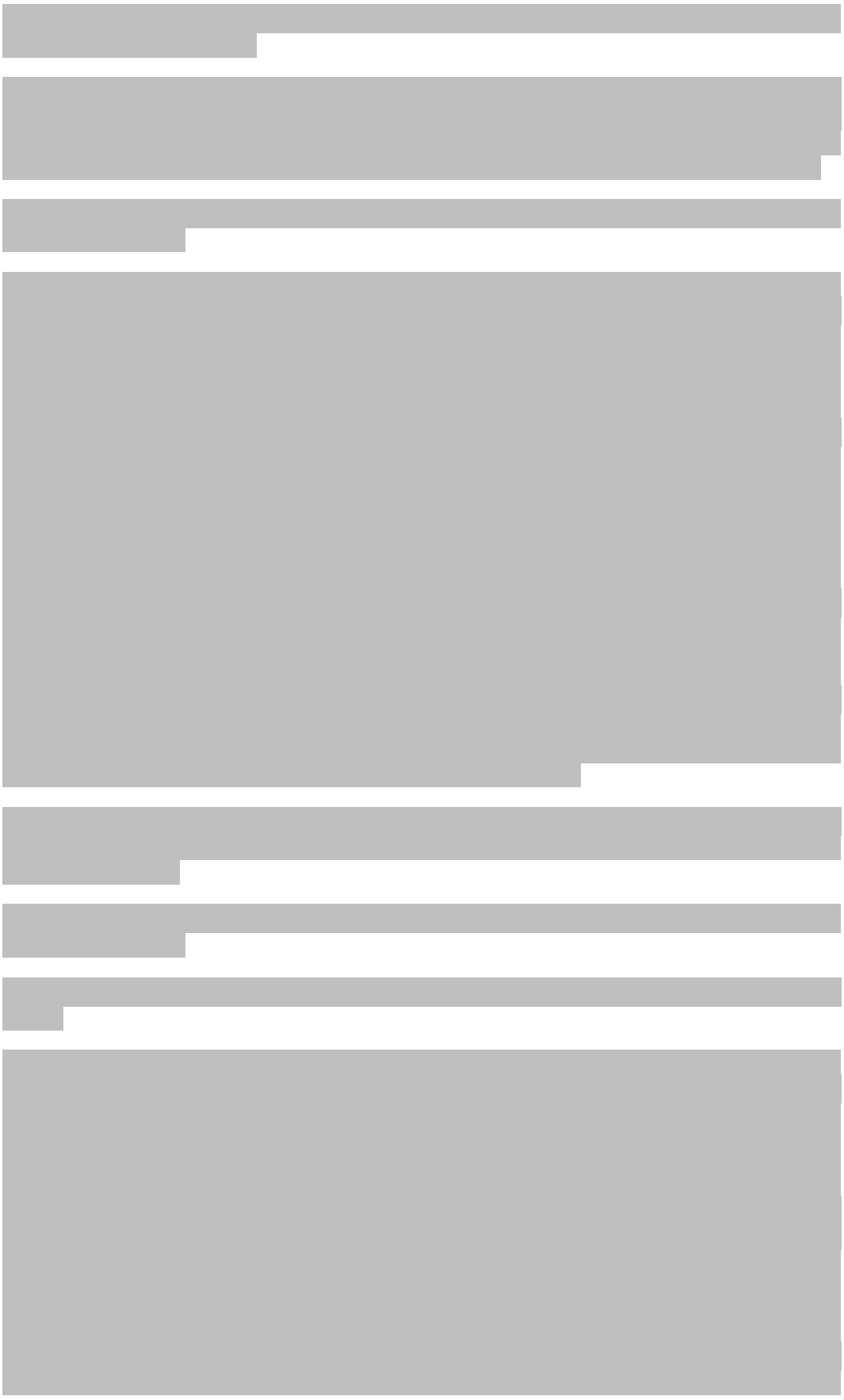


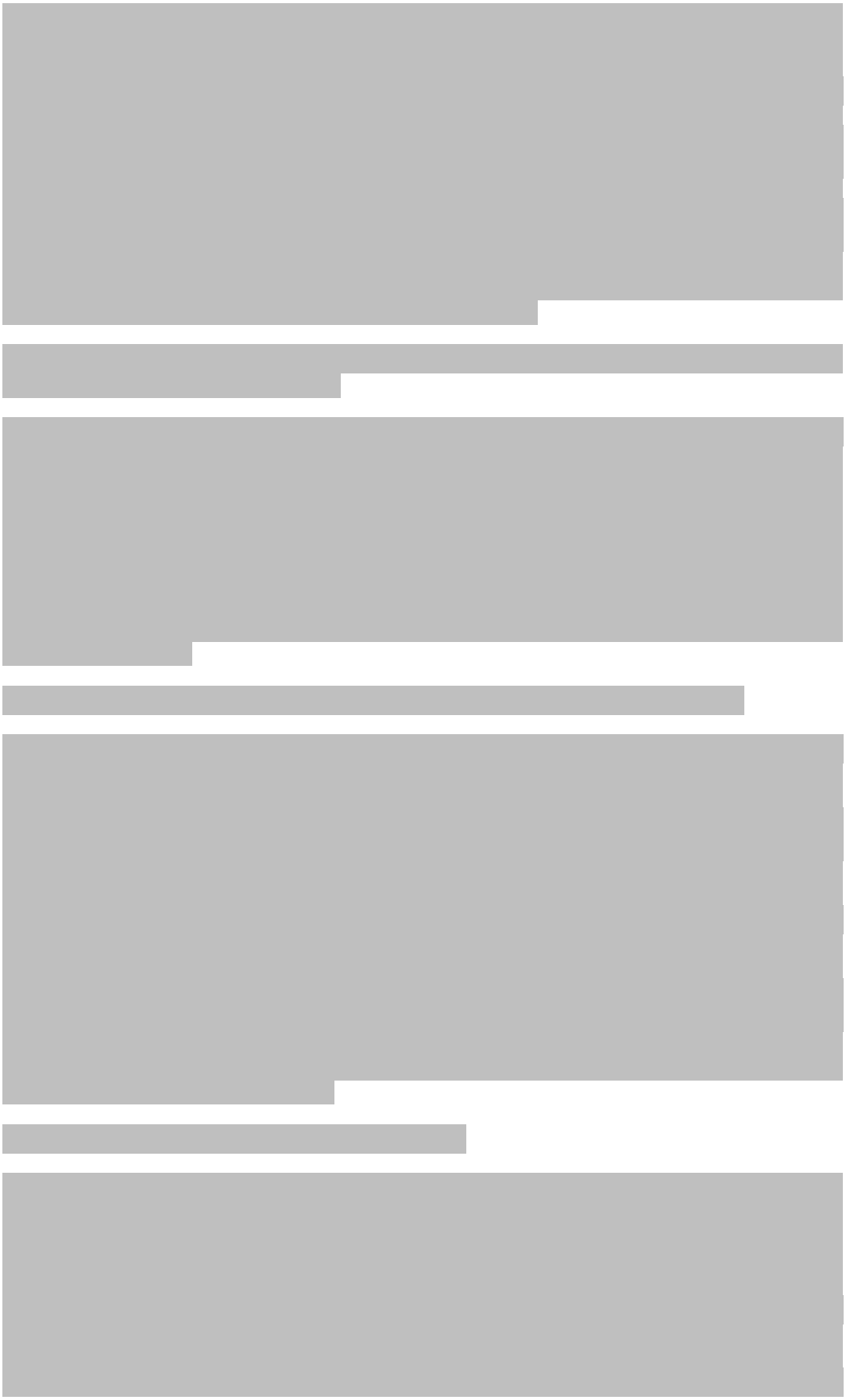


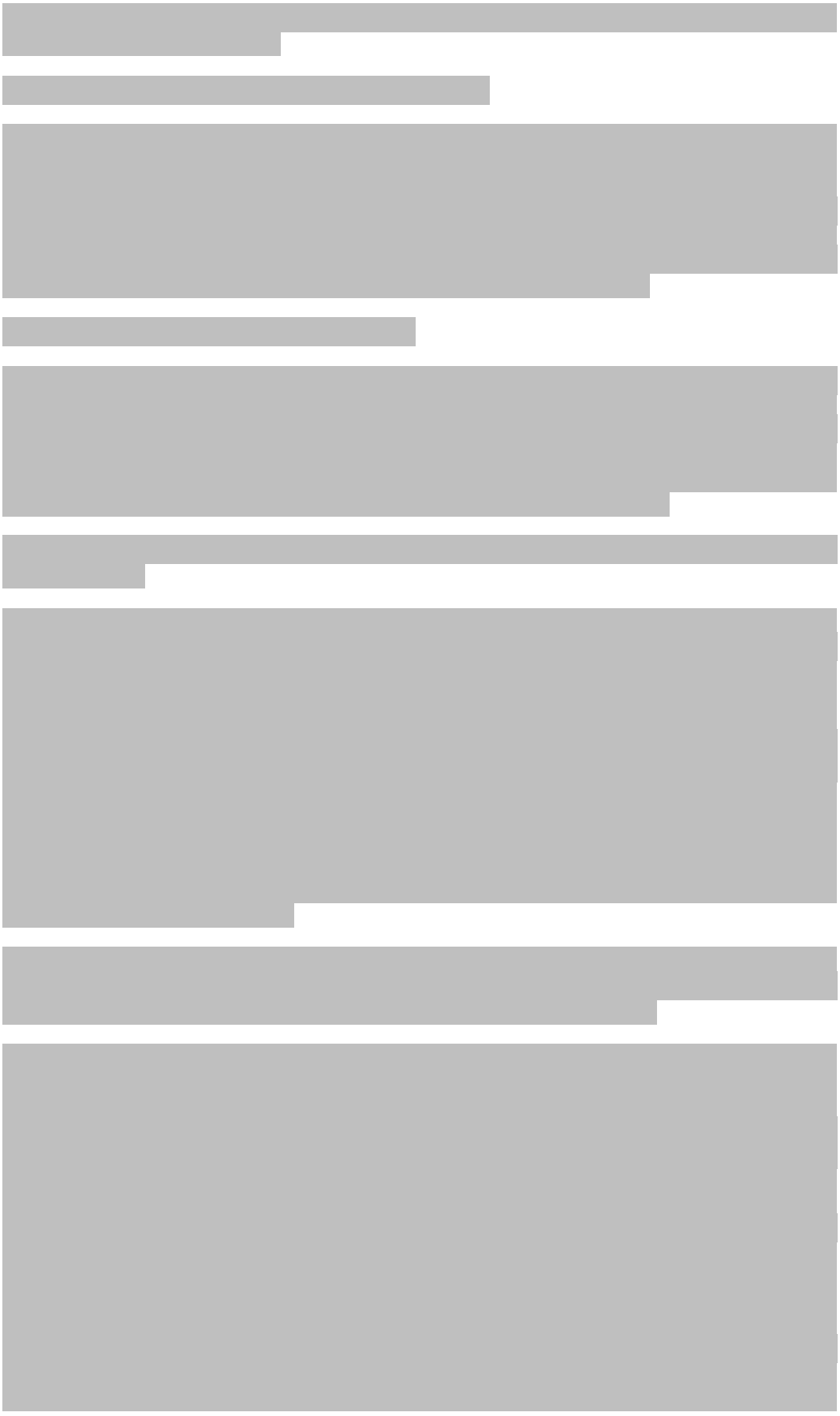


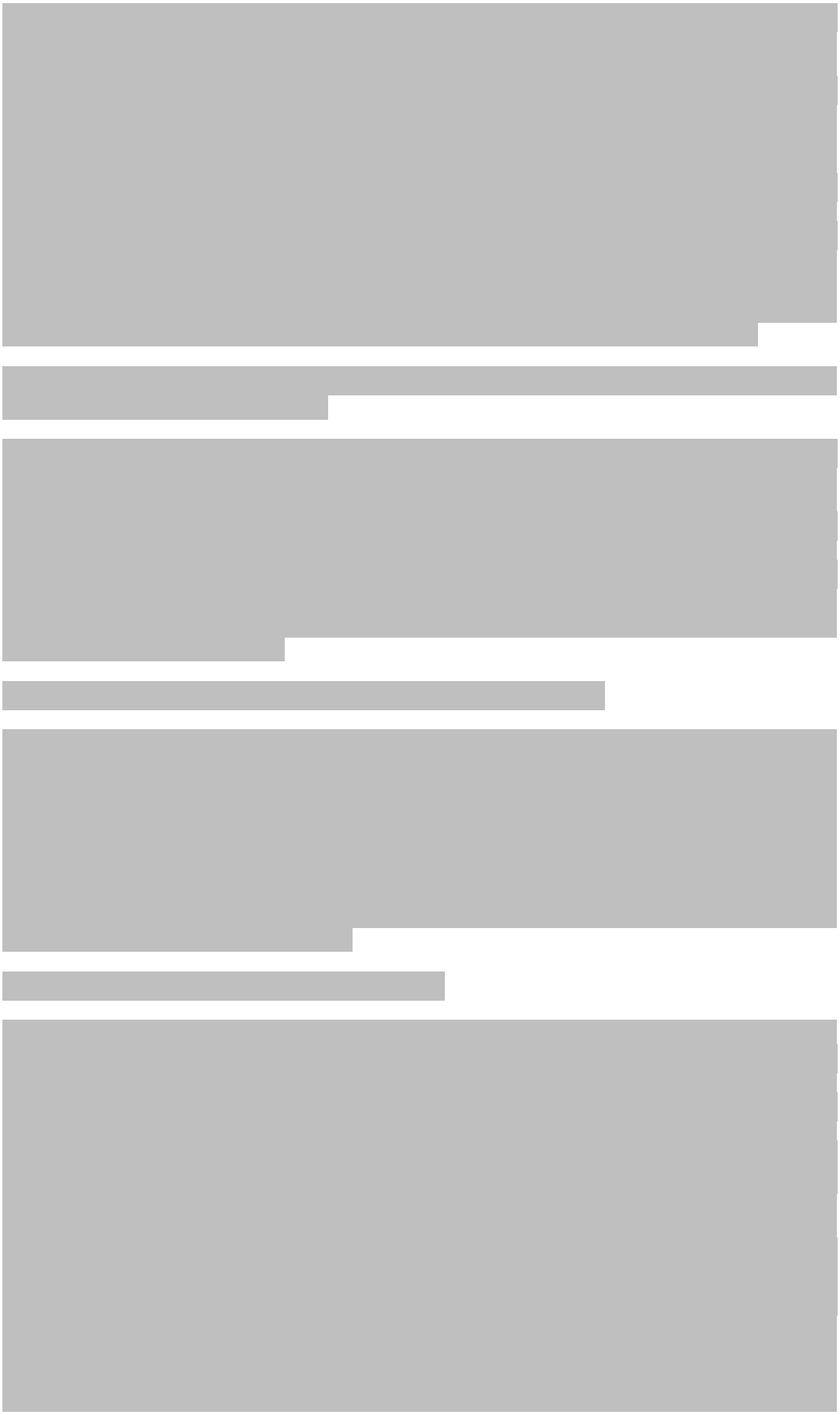


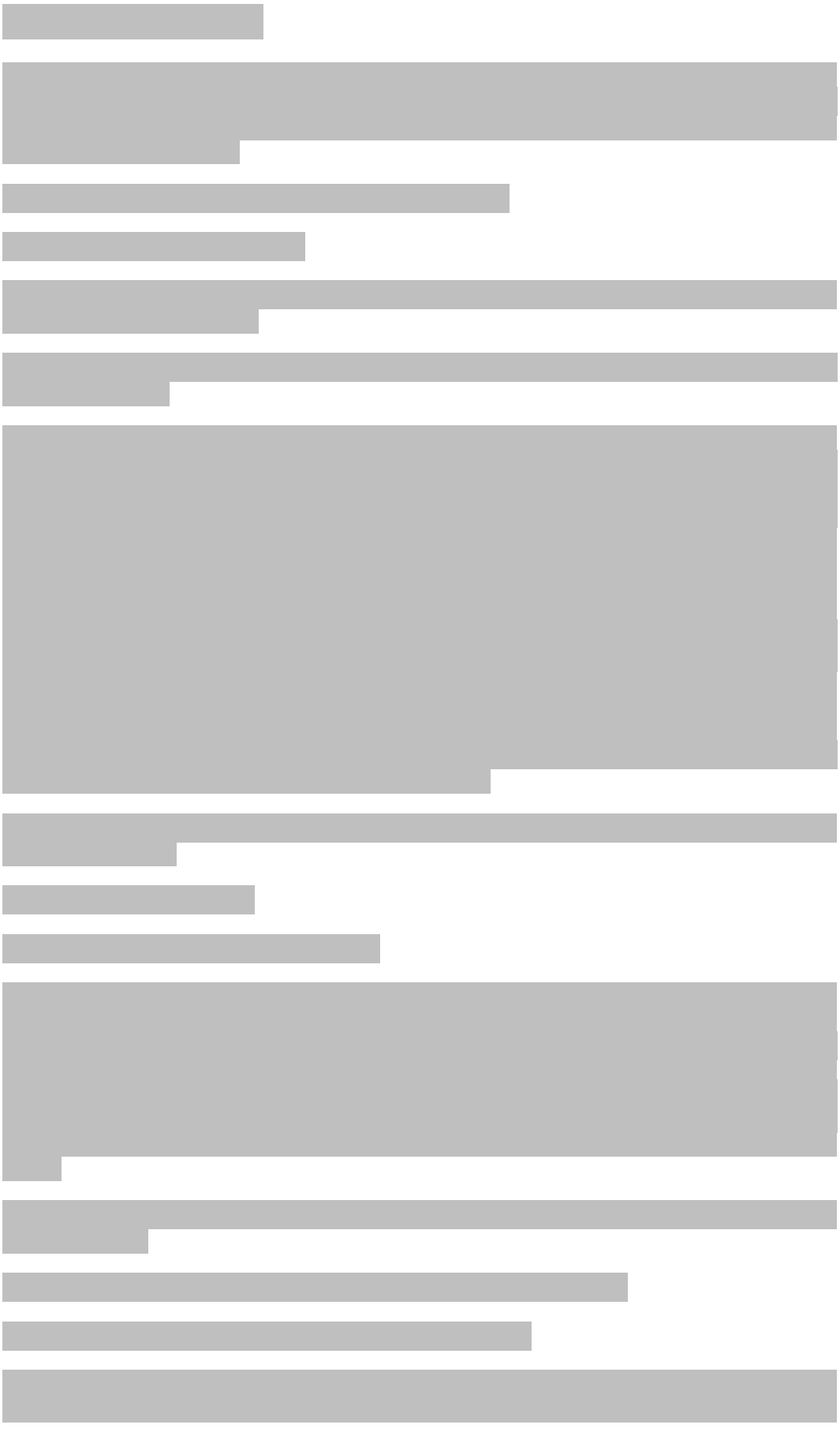


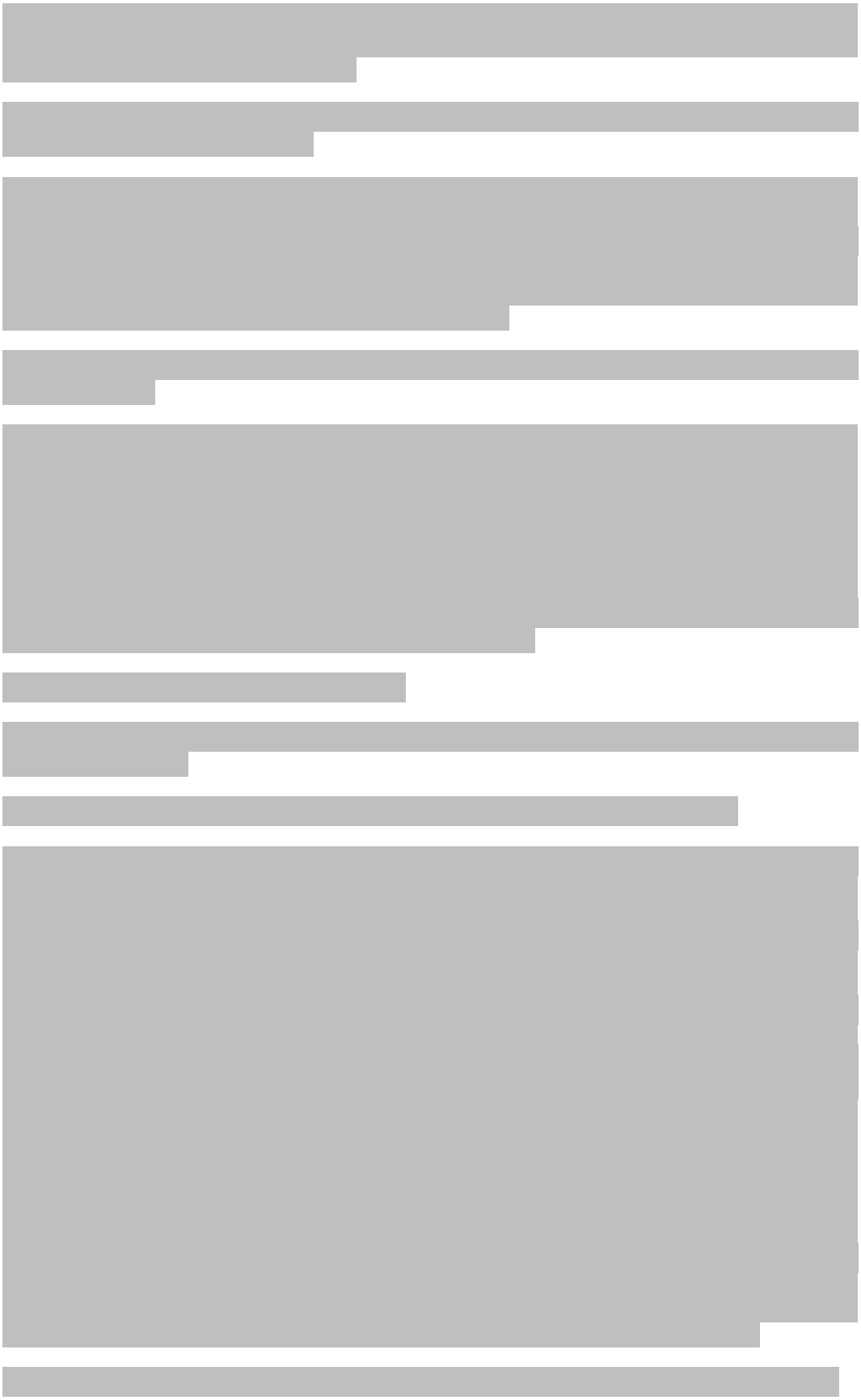


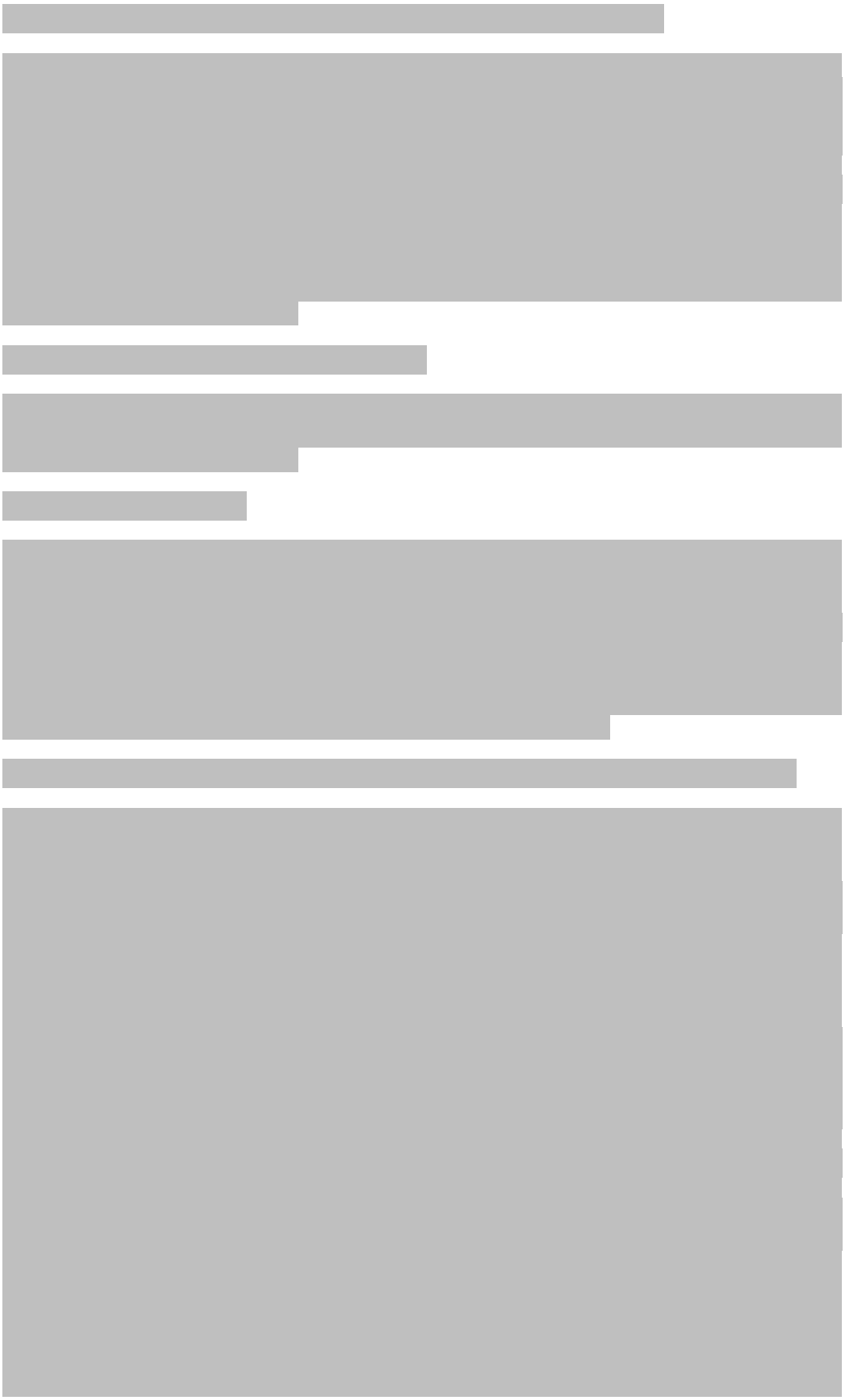


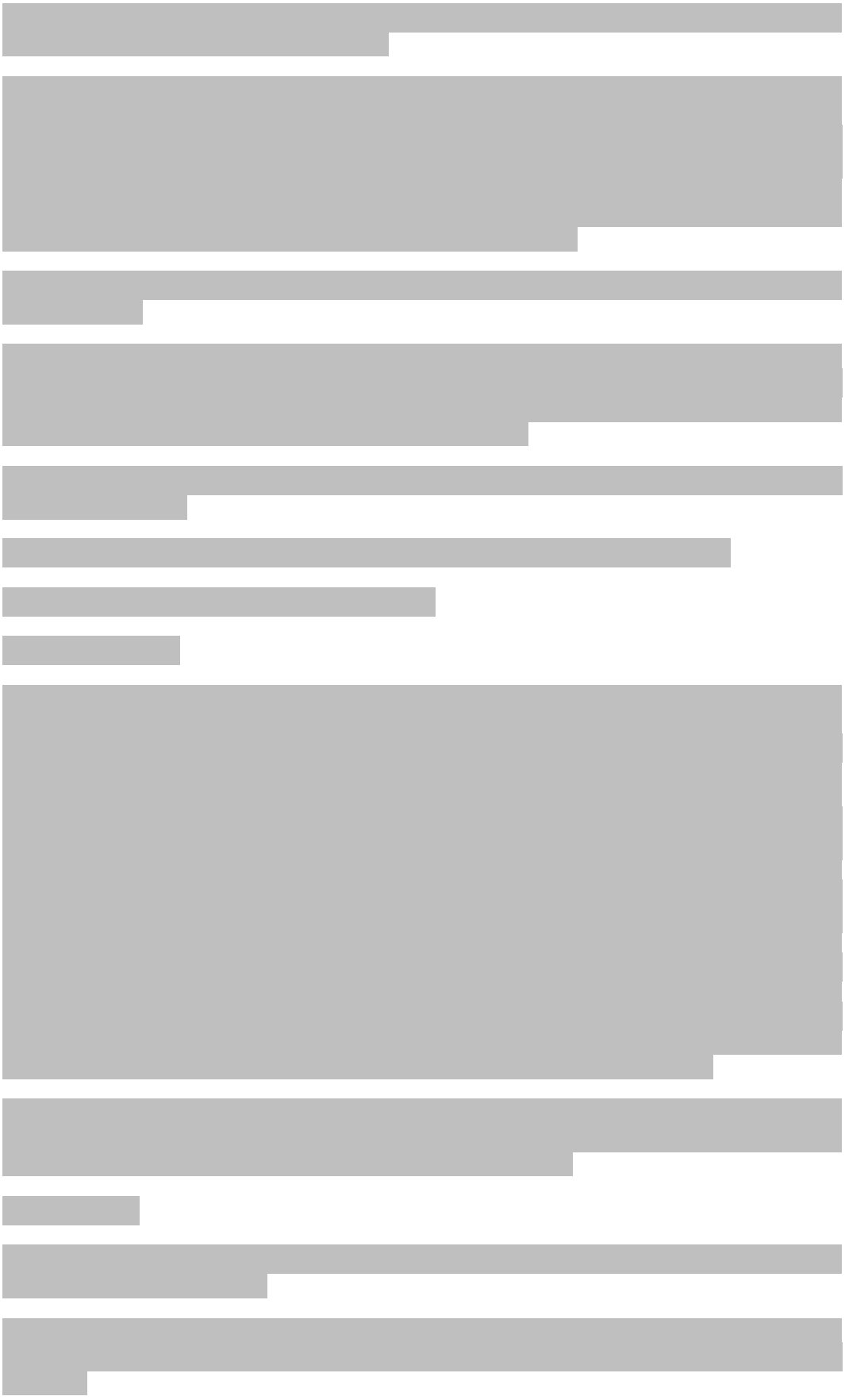


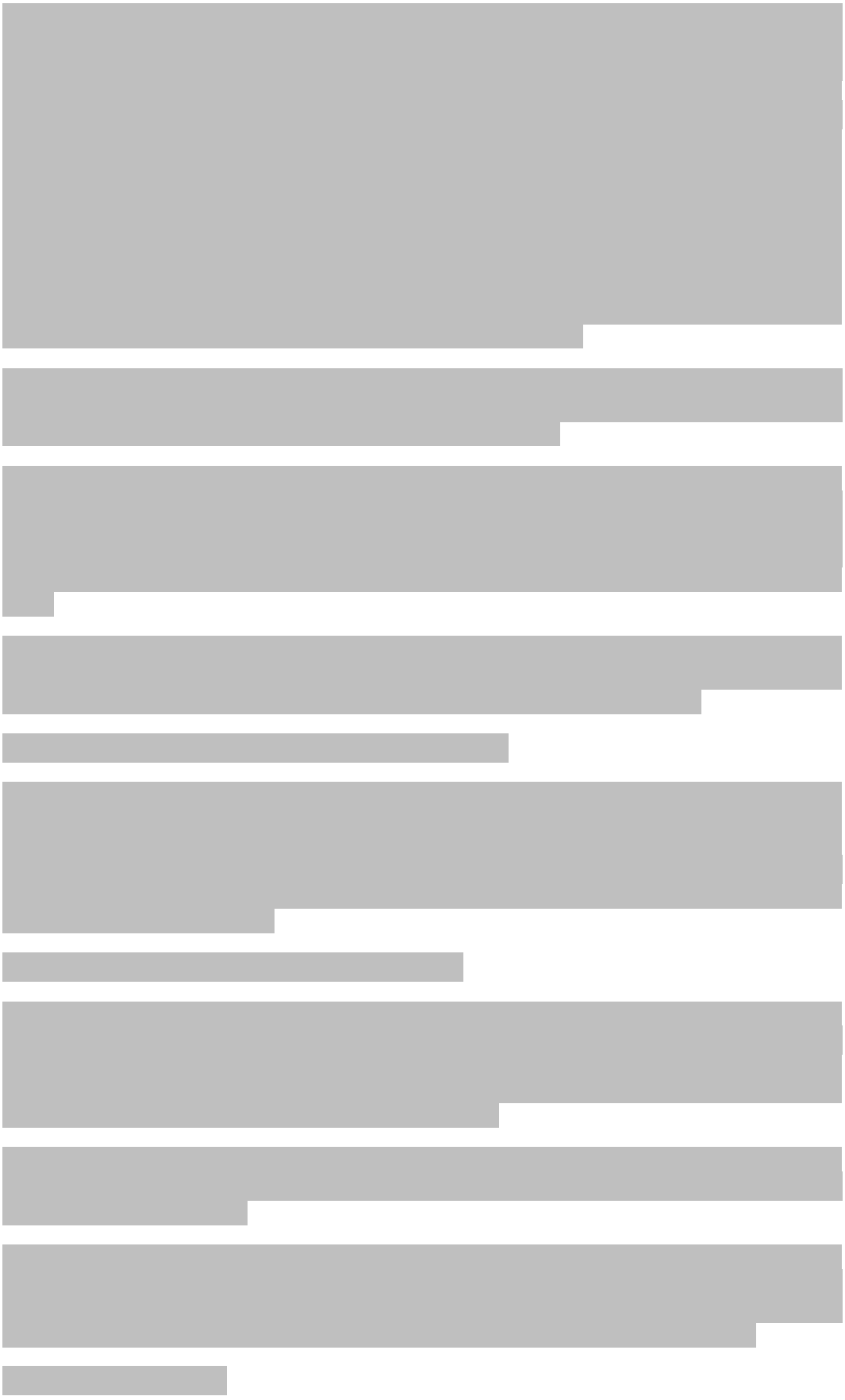


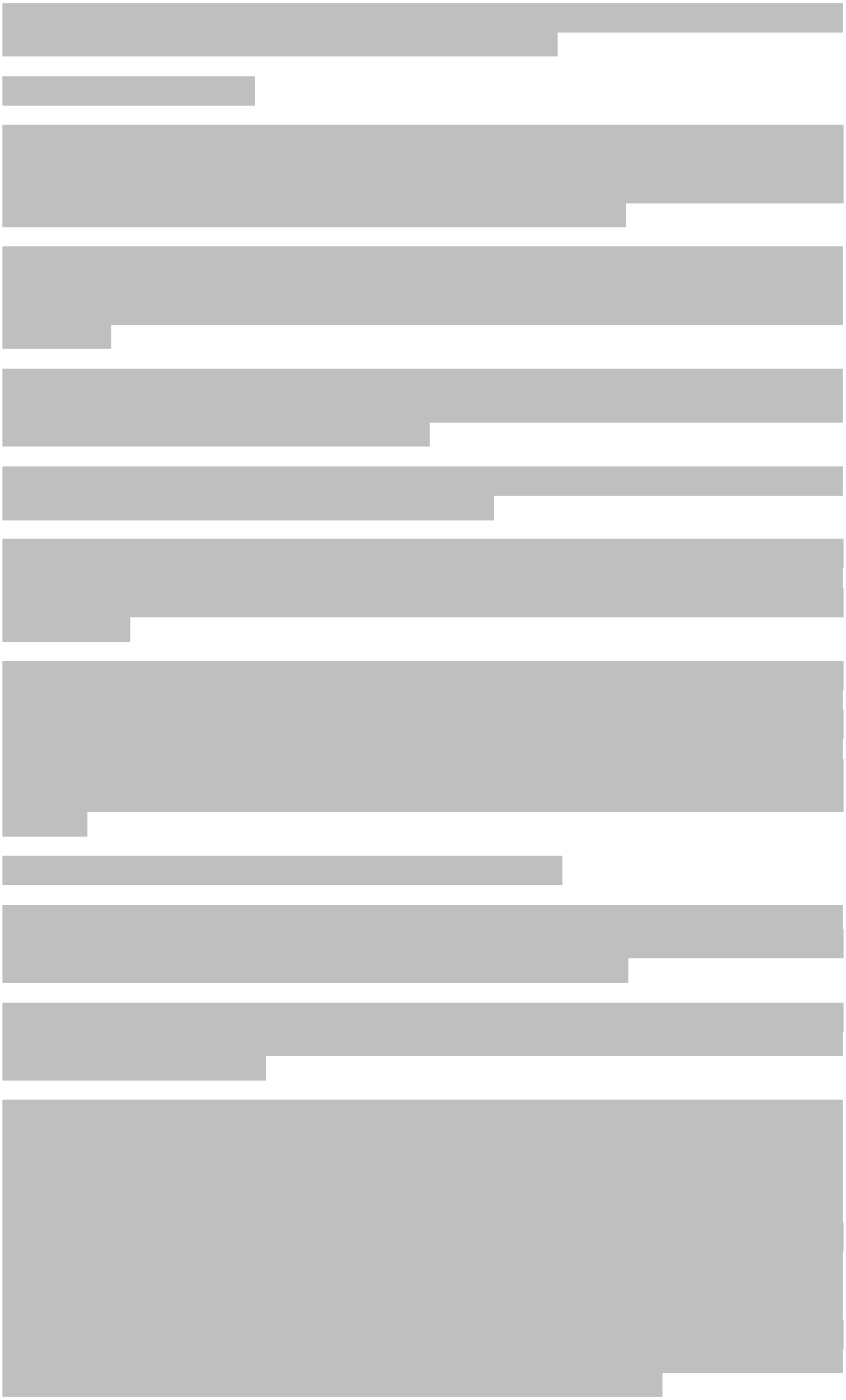


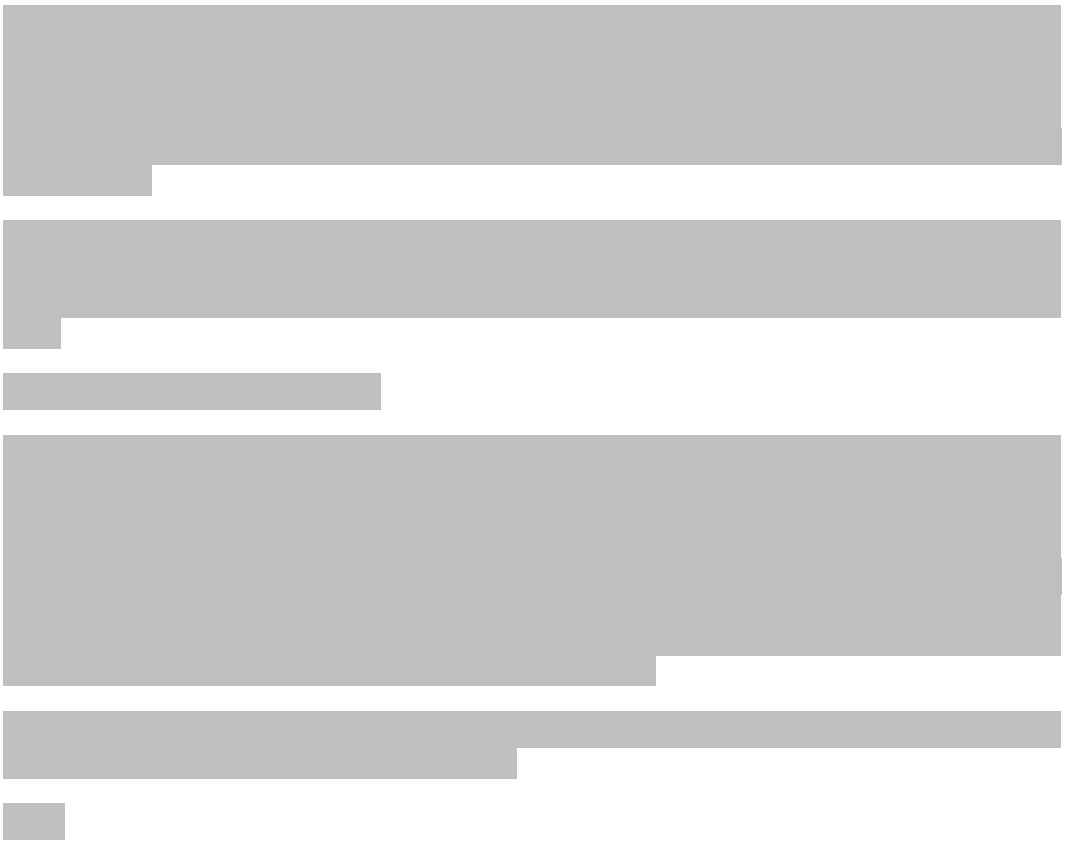


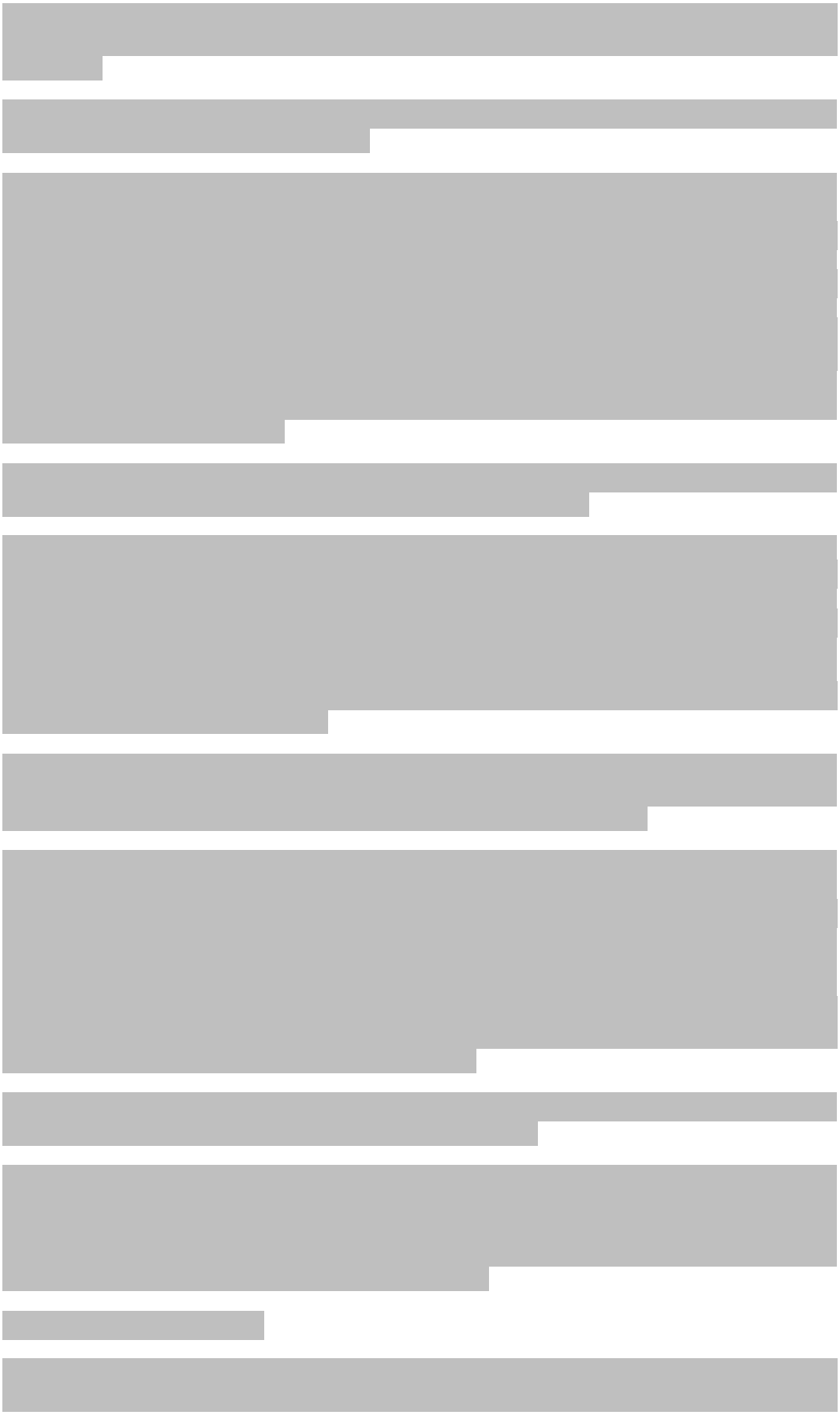


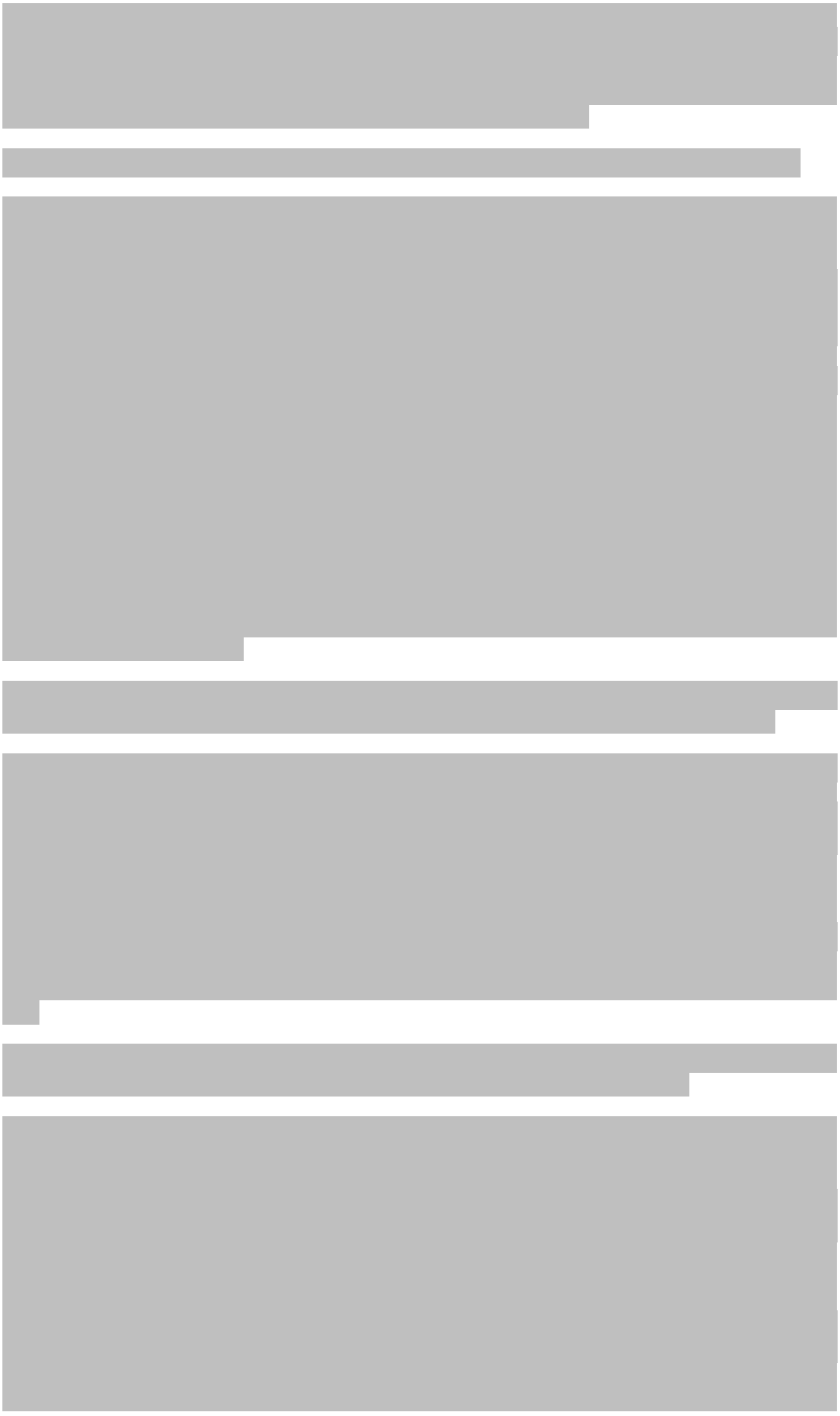


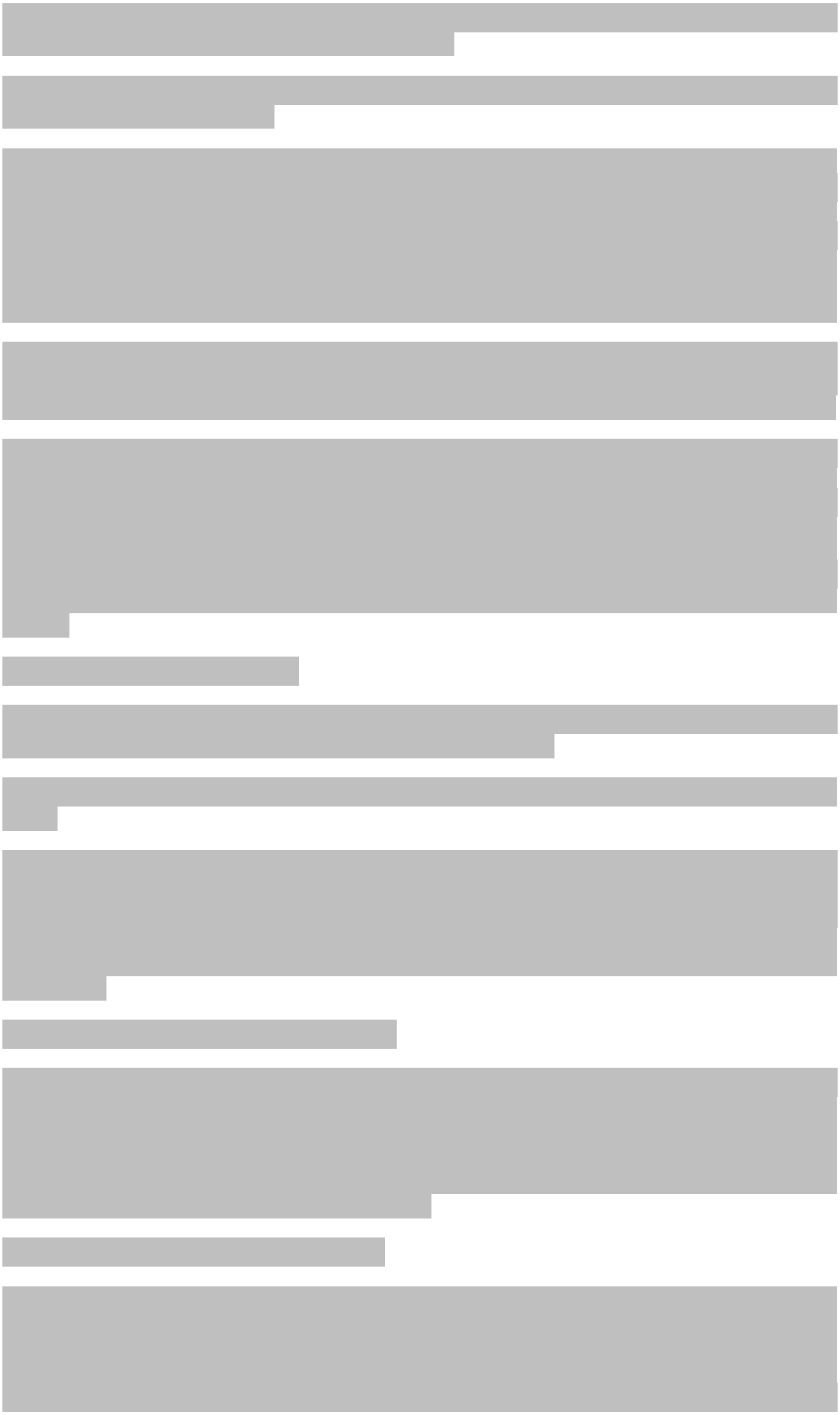


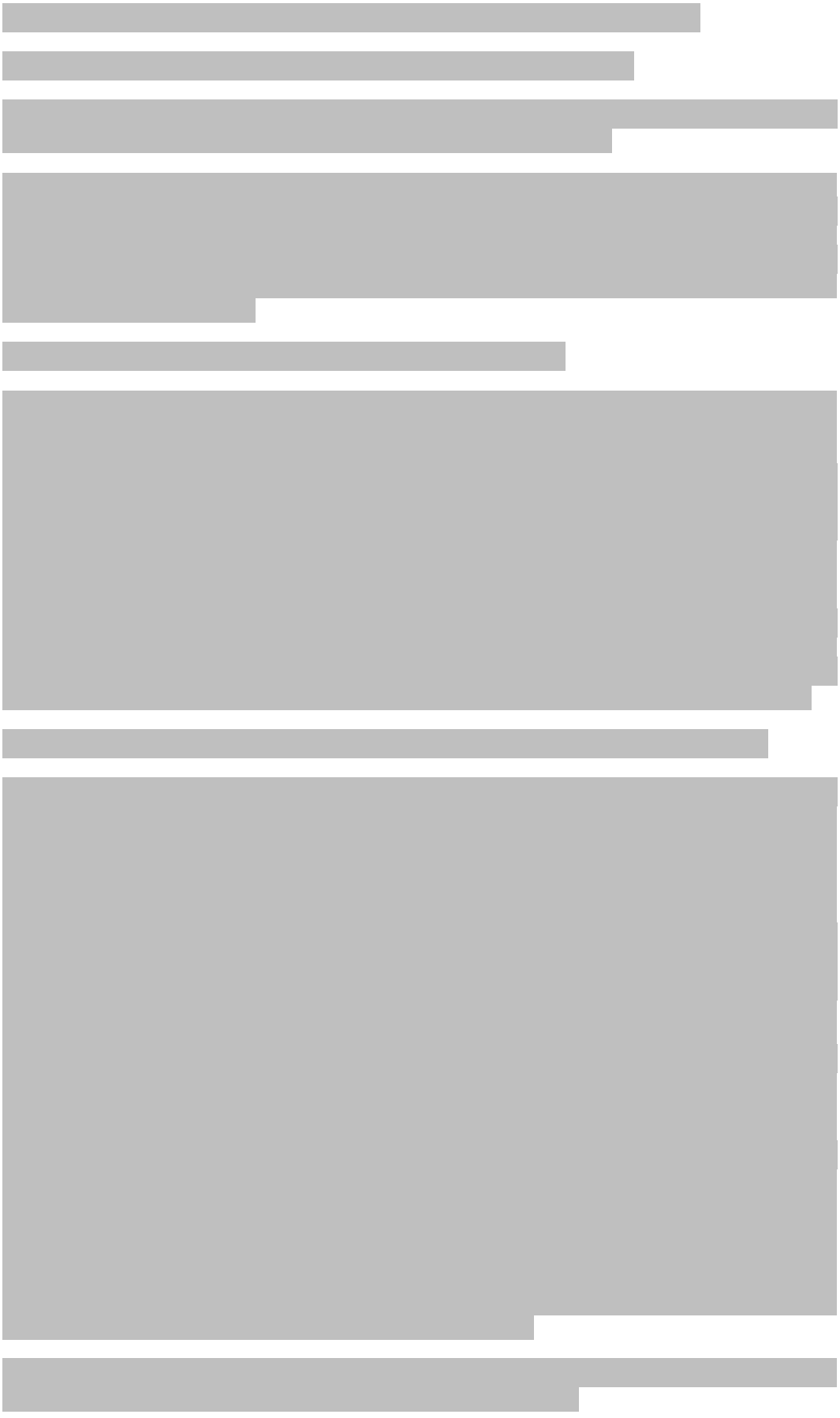


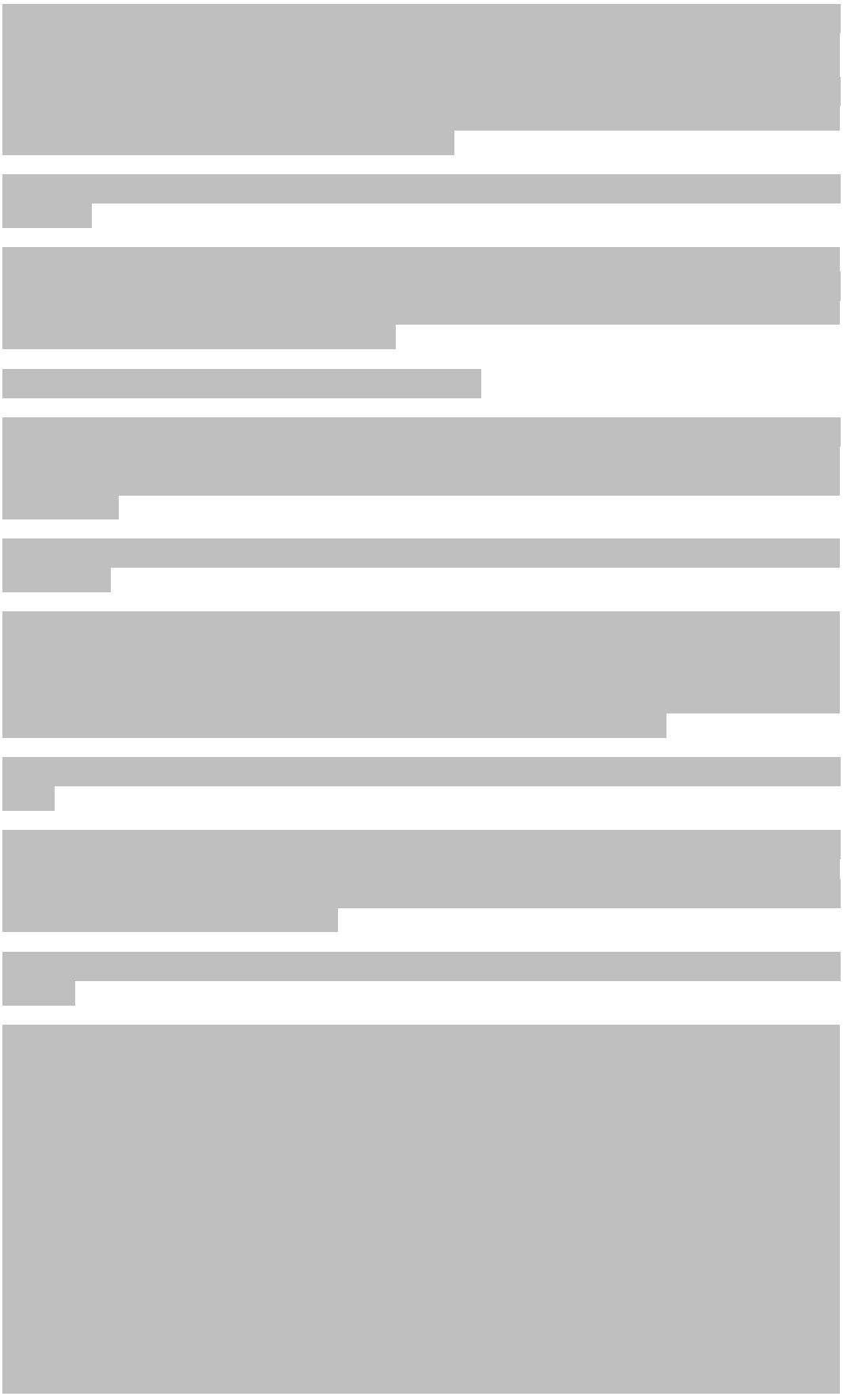


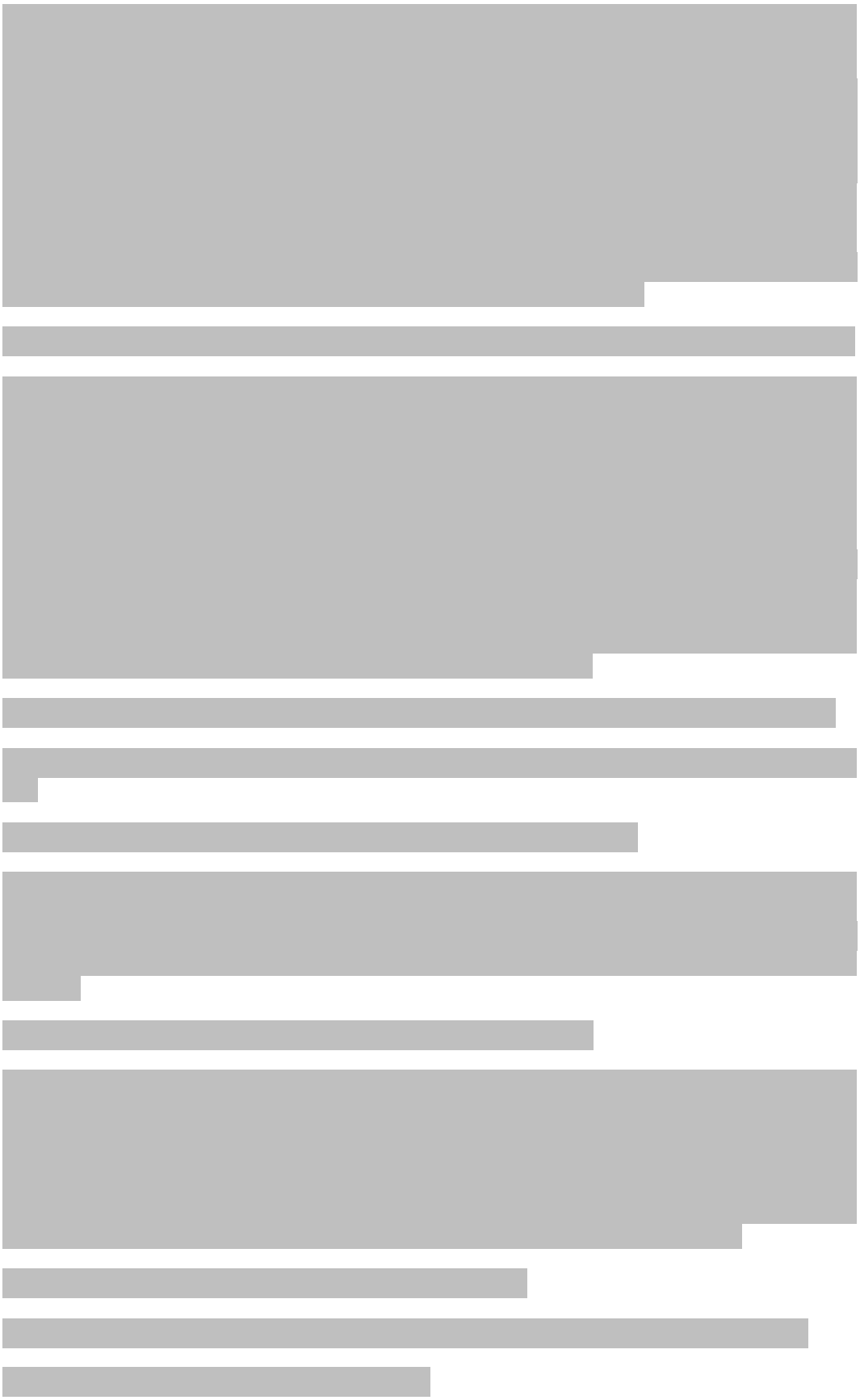


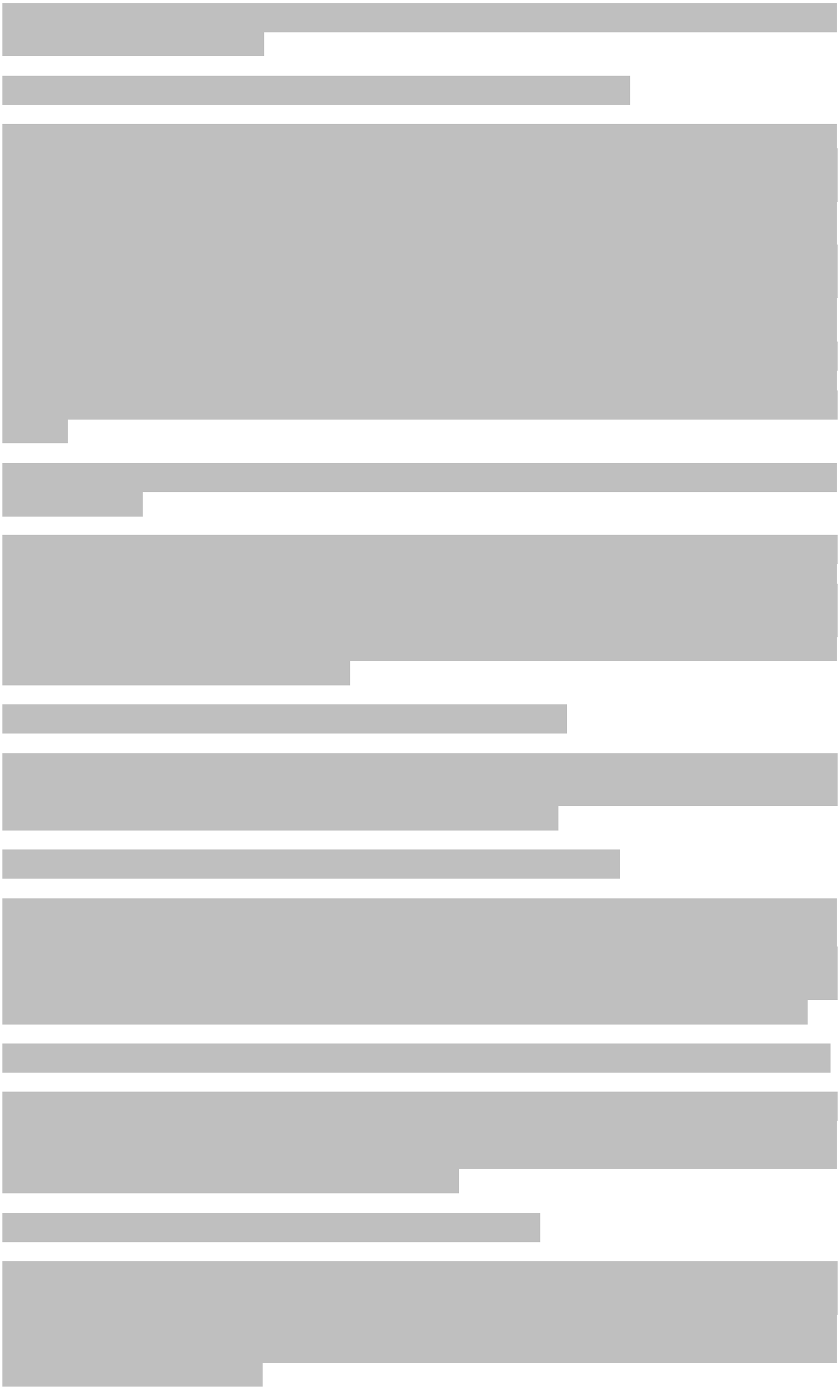


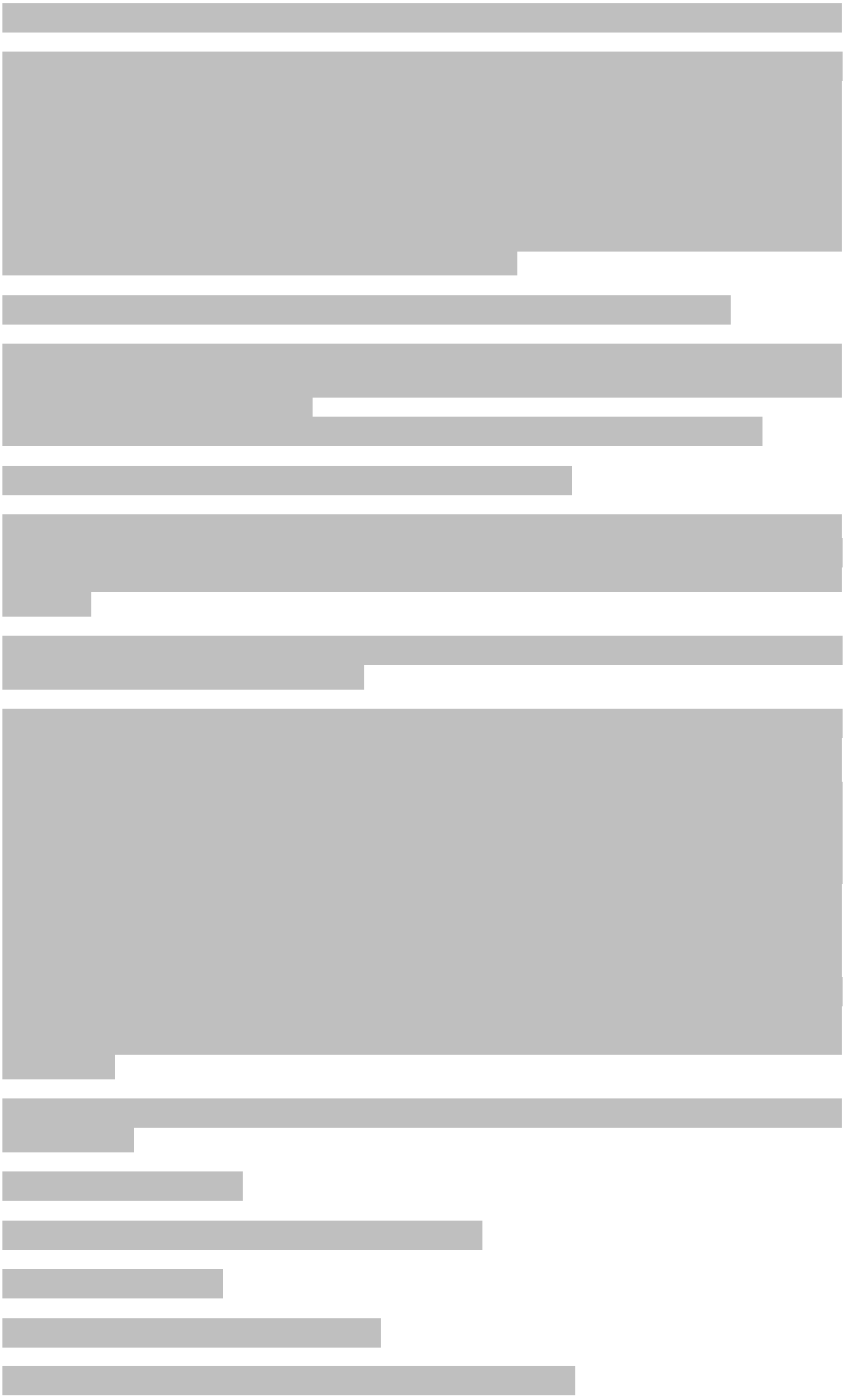


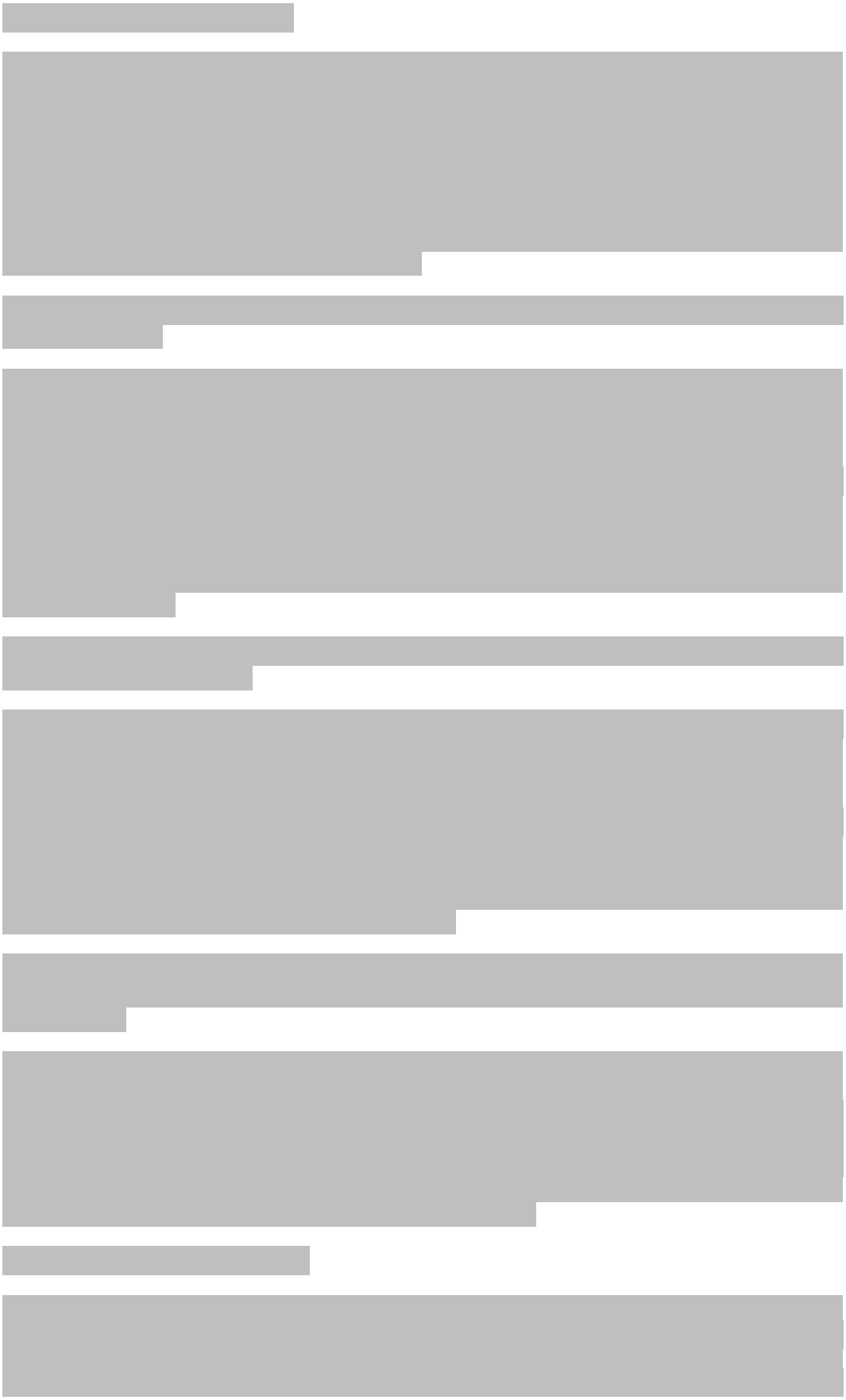


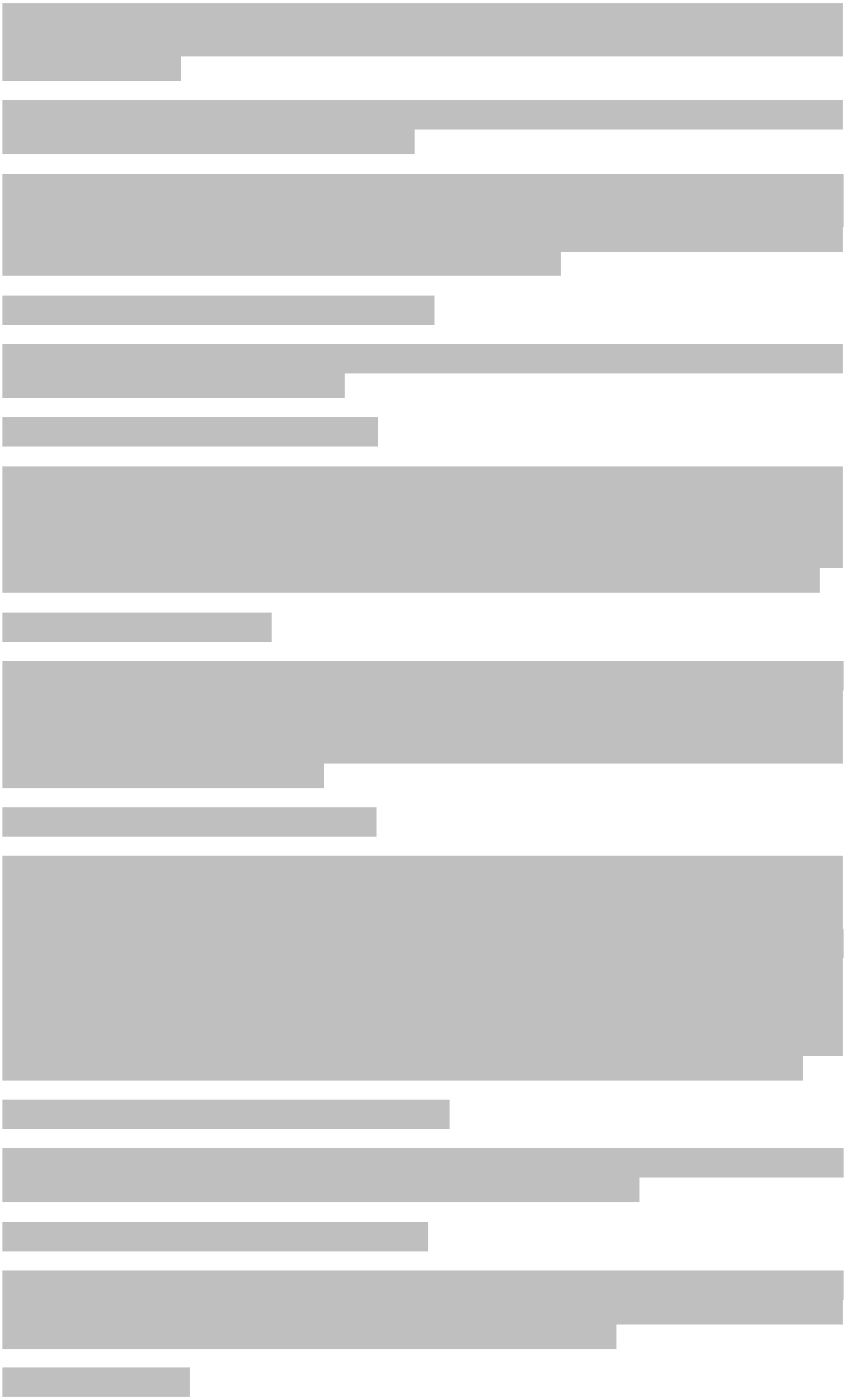


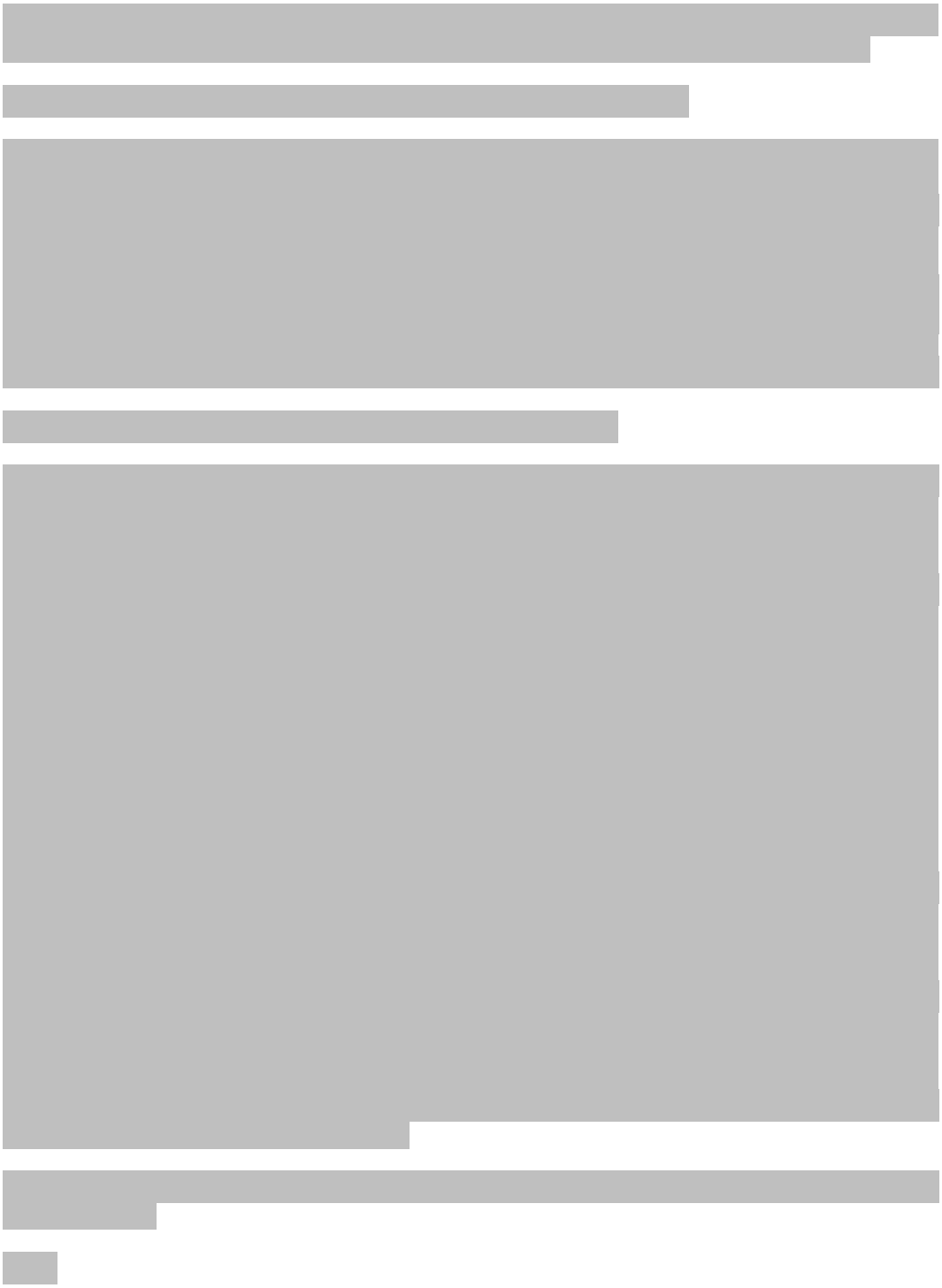


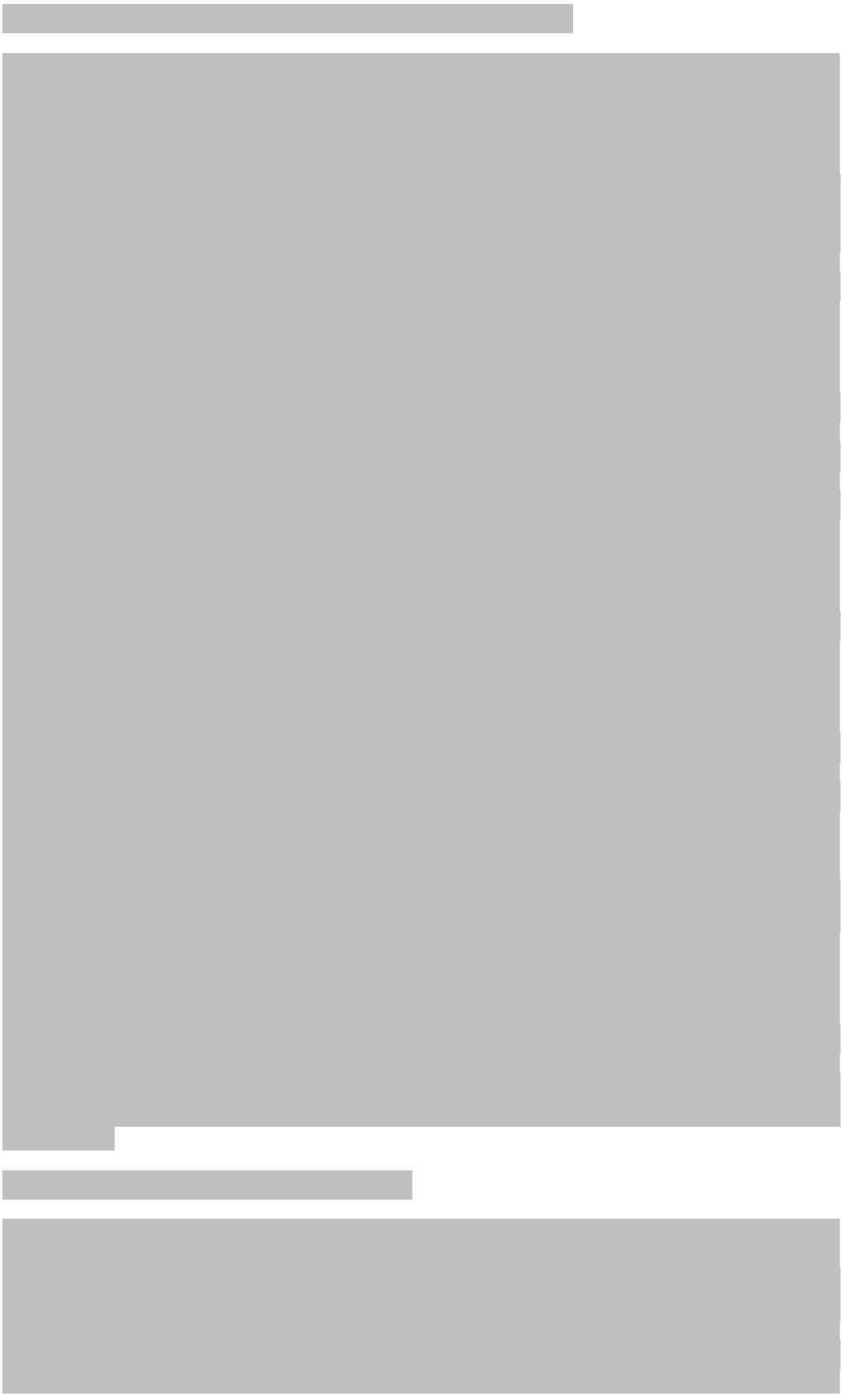


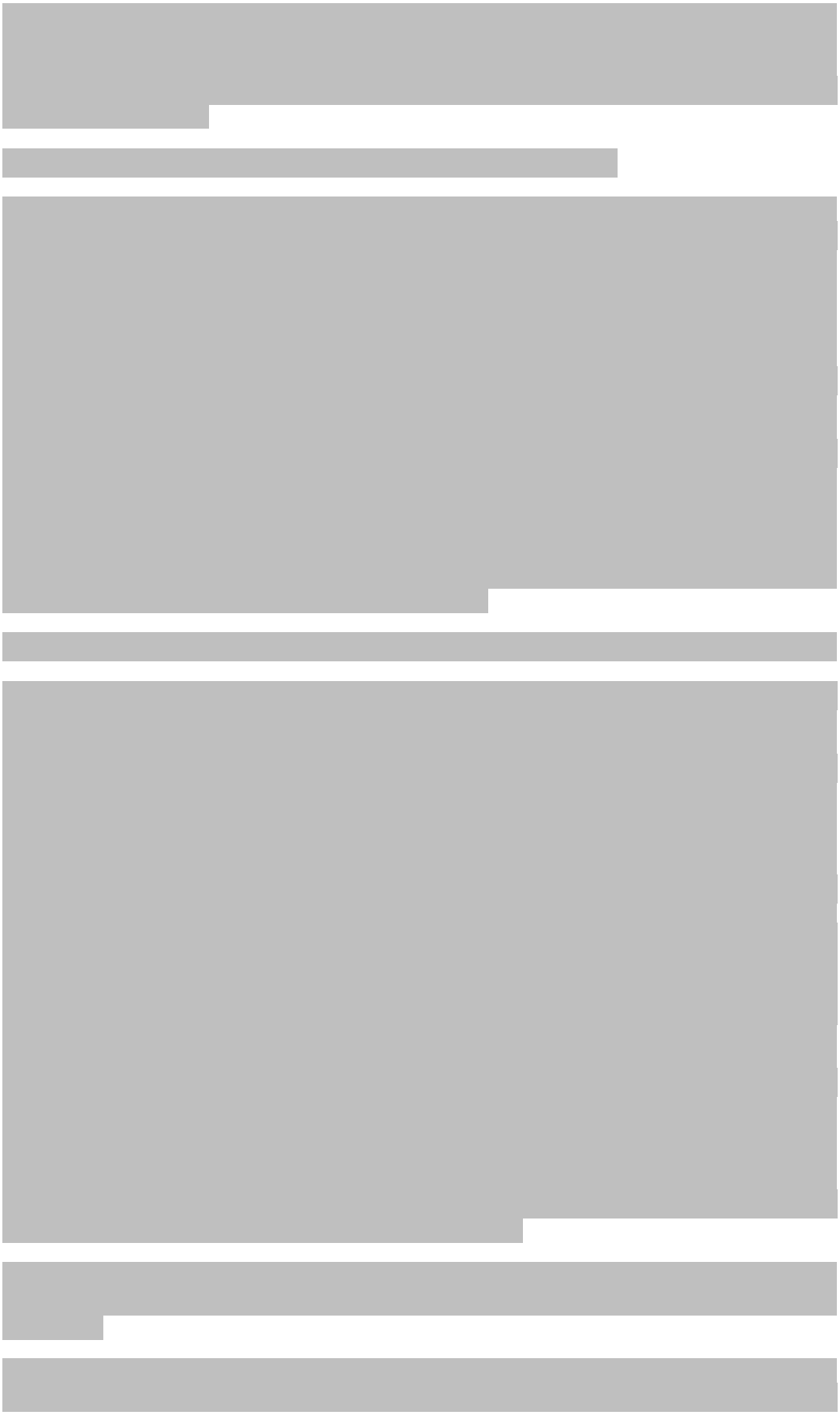


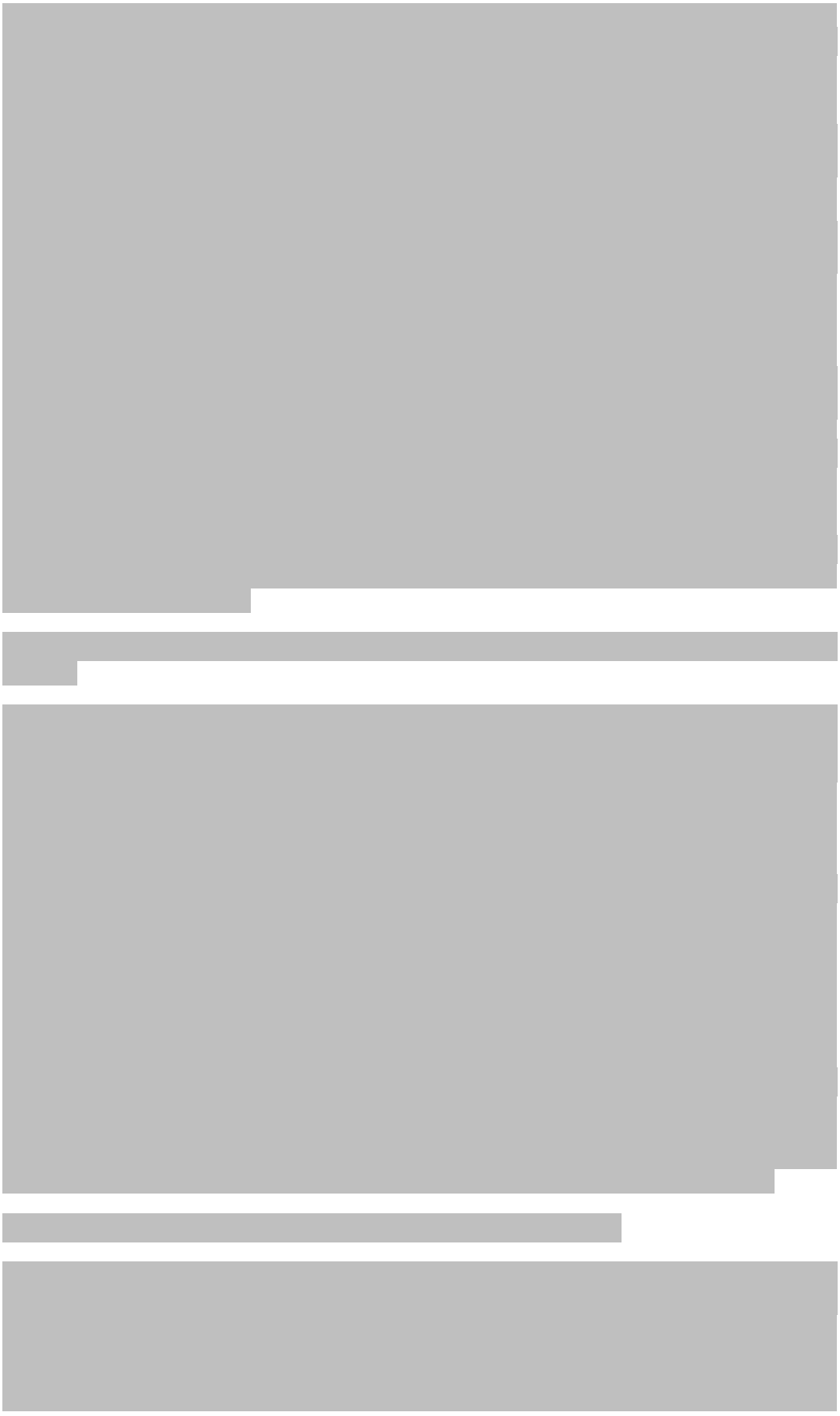


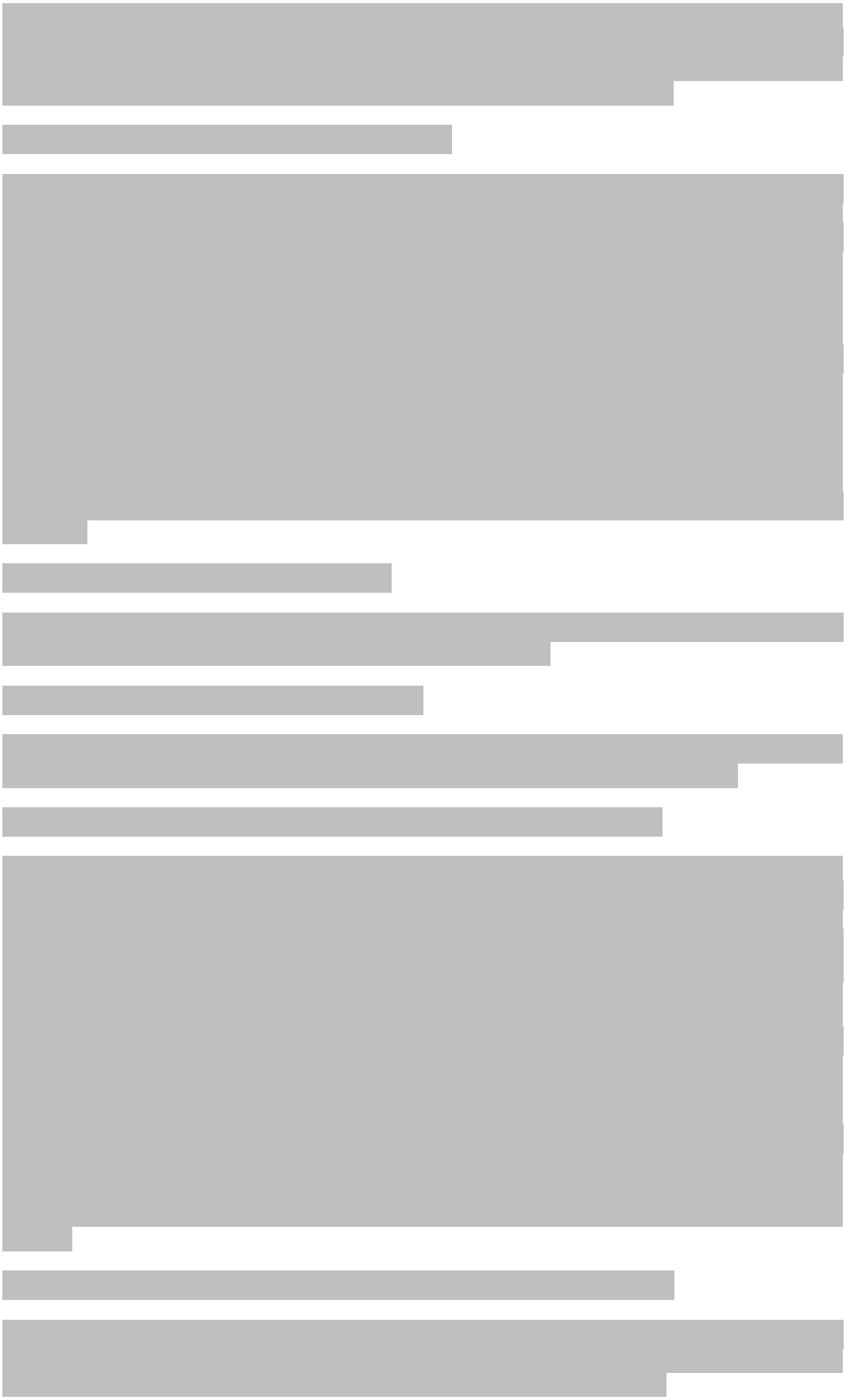


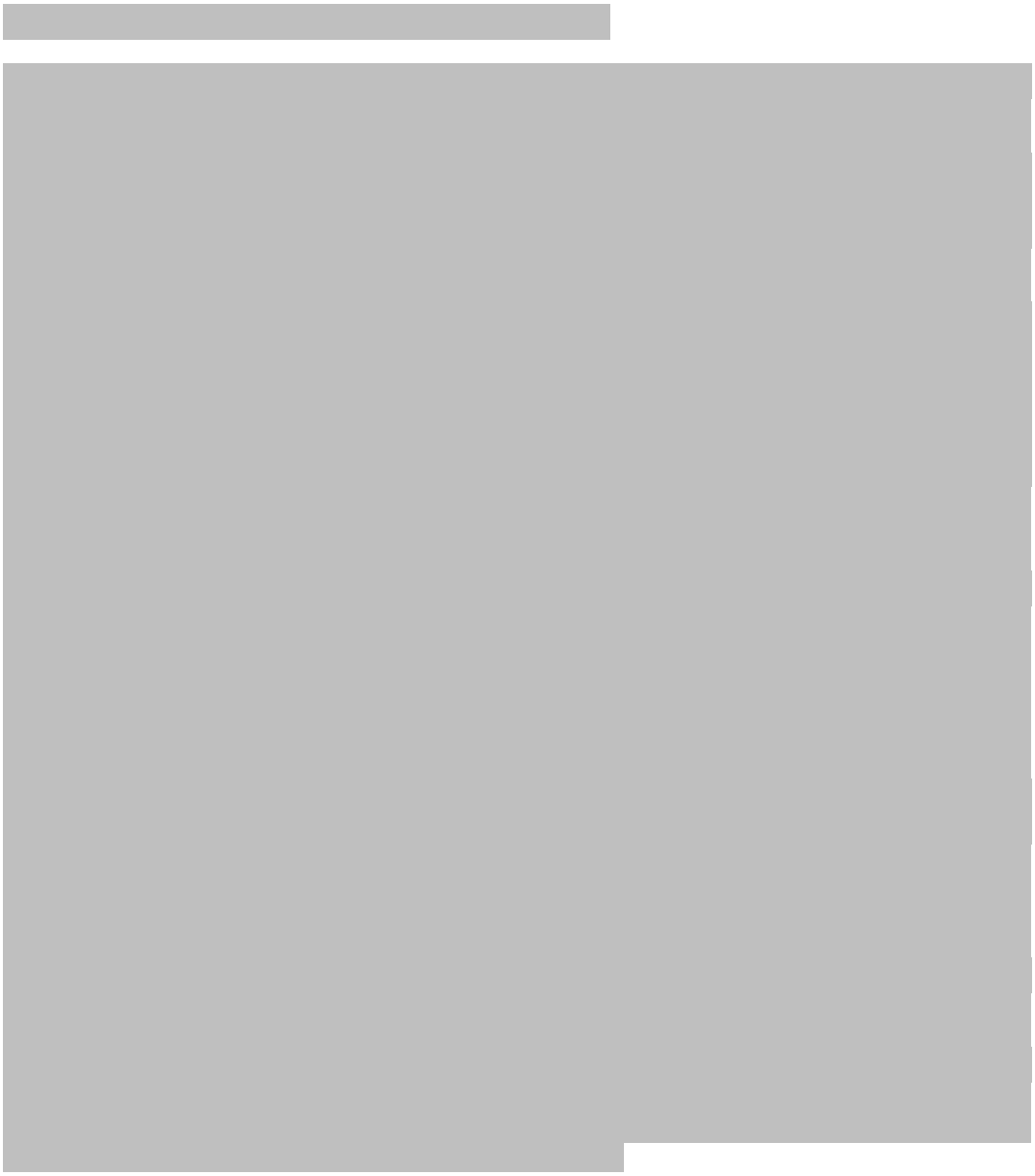


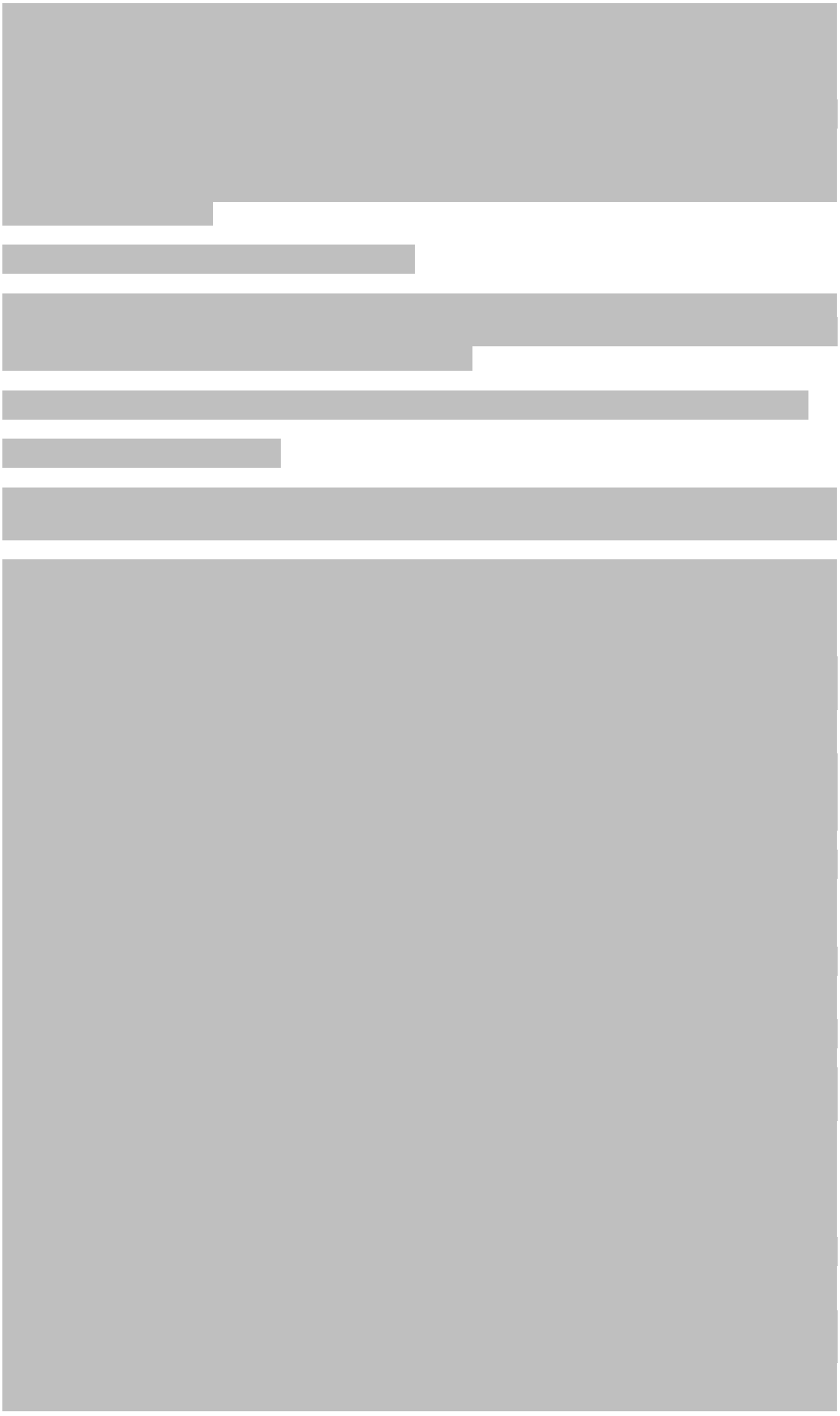


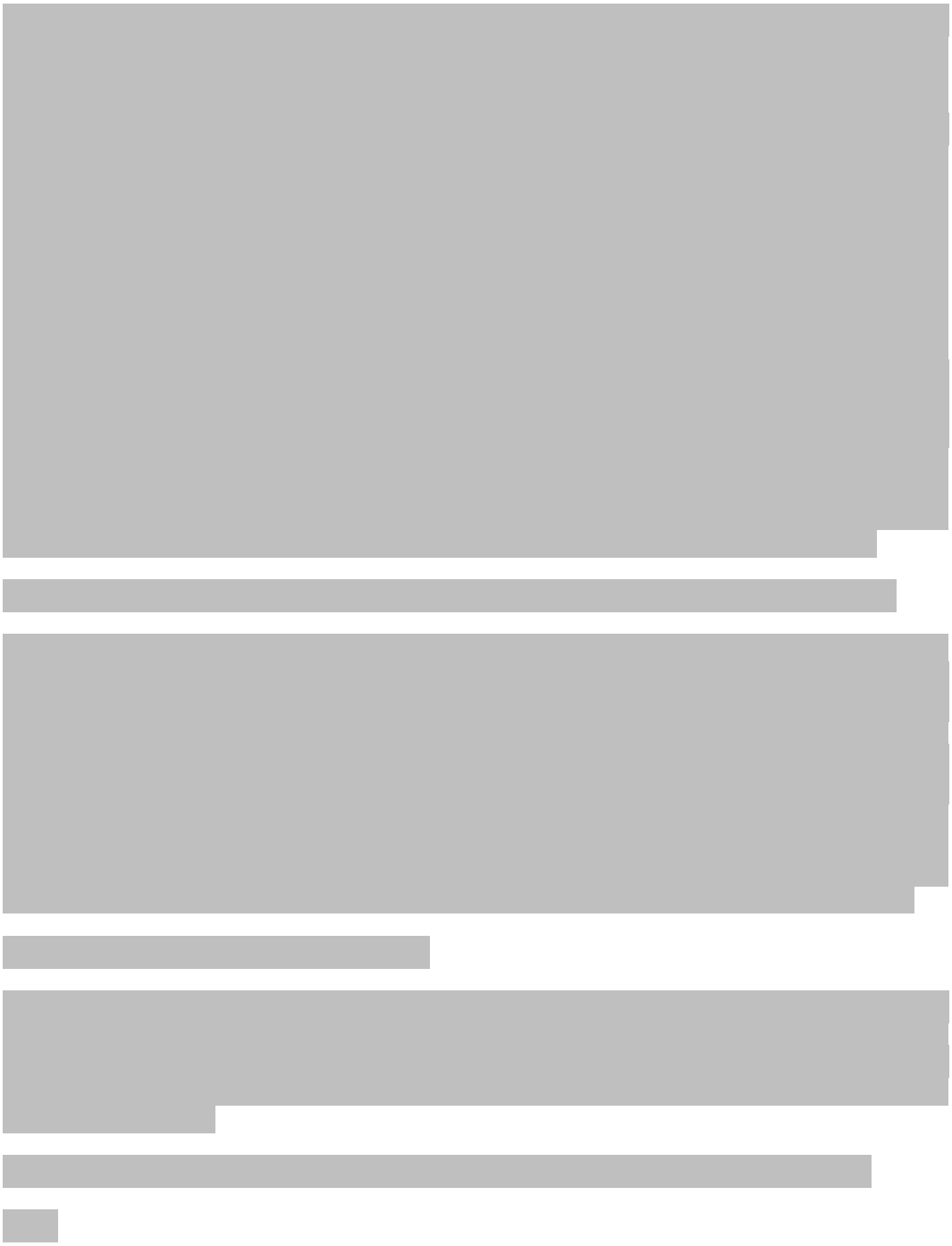












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